■ Entertainment
'Idol' finalist Amanda Avila may have Filipino roots

■ Lifestyle
Vandalism as art

■ News/A2
4th Makati bus bombing suspect nabbed in South

■ Business/B1
Shipbuilding sails back to glory days

Tanong ng Bayan
Dapat bang mag-retiro na ang Santo Papa?

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Malaysia crackdown creates labor shortfall

Only 16% of Pinay moms breast-feed, study shows

By Christine F. Figueras

Monday, March 7, 2005 • 38 pages / vol. 28 / no. 89

Log ban lifted in 3 areas

Asia women leaders mask continued inequality

Mindanao to supply local needs for wood

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Michael Defensor supervises sending operations on donated portions of the illegal watershed on board a military helicopter.

By Blancie S. Rivera and Philip C. Taboso

LOGGING operations in the country will resume in three regions this week.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said he planned to issue today a department order lifting the suspension of logging in the Ilocos, Caraga and Zamboanga regions.

He said the total log ban would be lifted in Regions 9 and 11, and in Caraga to meet the country's local wood requirement of 2 million cubic meters a year.

Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula) comprises the provinces of Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur. Region 11 (Davao) consists of Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte, and Caraga is made up of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte.

The total log ban will continue to be in effect in the 14 other regions of the country.

"These illegal logging areas will all be in Mindanao, to wit: in Luzon and the Visayas ... The logging areas would be open only to small cooperatives where the operation can meet," Defensor said during a meeting with reporters Monday.

The order comes three months after President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered all logging operations in the country following the flash floods and landslides that killed hundreds of people in eastern Luzon, mostly in Aurora and Quezon provinces. The landslides were blamed on logging in the Sierra Madre, the country's largest mountain range.

Defensor said the government could no longer maintain the totalban ban imposed last Dec. 9 because the ban provides for selective logging in the Philippines.

Anticipating criticism, from some politicians and groups, he said: "They're going to run as if we mean on a total log ban on an entire area with their management. If the lawmakers want a total log ban, then they must first amend the law."

He said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would allow logging in the three regions because they enjoyed constant rainfall, which helps in the natural growth of forests.

"Secondly, the people there are aware of the need for the sustainability of the forest because that is their livelihood. They know how to guard the forest," the secretary said.

Abraham has only about 30 logging concessionaires, but there are log companies, according to Defensor.

Congress casualty of intra-chamber squabbling

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

Sulu group says gov't rehab plan a face-lift

By Julie S. Alipala
PCIJ Mindanao Bureau

HUNDREDS of residents of Patarasan town in Sulu, who have been displaced by recent clashes in the province, line up to receive relief goods as part of the rehabilitation program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Survivor helps mark legacy of WWII veterans

By Nat Cuncosa

LESLIE Ann Murray: Former POW

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Second FRONTPAGE

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rain
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo	Cloudy with Rain
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rain
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Catbalogan	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calbayog	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rain

4th Makati bombing suspect falls

By Cecil Morella

A FOURTH suspect in the deadly Valentine's Day bombing in Makati City has been arrested, the military announced yesterday.

Ralith Bailey, 49, was collared by military intelligence operatives at his home in Barangay Lapog, Bagabungan, Magsaysay, Davao, at around 11 p.m. Friday.

Bailey was also reportedly a suspect in the bombing of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City on May 22, 2000, that killed one person and injured 11.

A statement issued by Army spokesperson Maj. Ernesto Torres said Bailey did not resist arrest when members of Military Intelligence Group Region 11, and the 46th Infantry Battalion arrested down on his home.

Bailey reportedly had an unfriendly arrest warrant against him.

No other details were given on Bailey's alleged participation in the Feb. 14 bombing at a passenger bus on Edsa that killed four people and wounded more than 100.

But police could not be reached yesterday.

Maj. Gen. Raul Relosa, commander of the 6th Infantry Division that took part in Bailey's arrest, said they relied on information passed on by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

"The Isafp was involved in the bomb attacks according to the early statistical office. We barely helped in the operations," Relosa said.

Bailey is reportedly in the custody of the 46th IB. "We will be turned over to the proper authorities," the Army statement said.

Dr. Nelita Dee, third suspect in the Makati bombing surrendered to local officials in Barangay Mambuche Nuevo, Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

Crisgod Rimorid, also known as Boy Negro, Rito Ted Santos and Madam, could be supplied the 1500 the bombers used to carry out the Makati attack.

Police investigators officials said Rimorid, was an "ordinary Abu Sayyaf member" who was ordered to deliver the bomb to two convict Muntaleyang City.

The two, Gamal "Tagay" Sahaya and Angelo Trinidad, also alias Khalil, were the first to be arrested after the bus bombing and have been charged with multiple counts of murder, frustrated murder and illegal possession of explosives.

Sahaya and Trinidad were also believed to be members of the Abu Sayyaf, which claimed responsibility for the most simultaneous bomb attacks on Feb. 14 in Makati, Davao and General Santos cities that killed a total of 13 people and wounded scores of others.

Police said Rimorid and another person, Jomar Intalli, who is in their custody, were also the ones who left a bag filled with explosives at a billiard hall in Tagaytay days after the Makati blast.

The police discovered the bag on Feb. 23.

In another development, a suspected member of the Abu Sayyaf who was allegedly involved in the celebrated Dos Dalmas kidnapping in May 2001 was arrested on Friday.

Army spokesperson Bacarro said the suspect, Jeanifer Mohamad, was arrested in Camp Lanao, Iligan, Mindanao, by operatives of Task force Ilaninnongo.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE) FOR LAWYERS

March 12 & 19, 2005 and April 2 & 9, 2005

The Supreme Court of the Philippines mandates ALL LAWYERS to comply with the 36 credit unit requirement under Bar Matter 850 as a requisite for continuing the practice of law. Failure to comply would mean being listed as a delinquent member of the IBP and will not be allowed to practice law. The first compliance period ended last December 31, 2004. Lawyers may avail of our 36-UNIT FULL COURSE SEMINAR which may be credited to either the first compliance period or the second compliance period.

Venue (City & Date/Session Attended)	TIME	SUBJECT/ASSIGNED SPEAKER/ CREDIT UNITS (CU)	Subject/CU/MCL	Lecturer/CU/MCL
March 12, 2005 Saturday	8:00 am	Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy (3 CU)	Legal Writing	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez
	10:00 - 11:30am	Family Law Civil Code (2 CU)	Civil Code, Family Code & Criminal Laws	Justice Noel G. Tijam
	1:00 pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Updates in Criminal Law	Justice Oberdiek M. Peralta
	2:30 - 3:30pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (1 CU)	International & Domestic Arbitration	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
March 19, 2005 Saturday	8:00 am	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Updates in Civil & Criminal Procedure	Justice Rebecca J. Flores
	10:00 - 11:30am	Alternative Dispute Resolution (1 CU)	ADR in the Workplace	Hon. Evalyn G. Ancheta
	1:00 pm	MCLE Procedural Subjects Introduction and the Law (1 CU)	Synopsis of Current Bar/Bench Significant Developments & Pronouncements	Justice Ruperto T. Martinez
	2:30 - 4:30pm	Legal Ethics (2 CU)	New Rules on Notarial Practice & Updates on Legal Ethics	Justice Hector L. Hofilena
April 2, 2005 Saturday	8:00 am	Child Advocacy & Legal Practice (3 CU)	Child Advocacy	Justice Oswaldo D. De Leon
	10:15 - 11:45am	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2 CU)	Trial Techniques: The Art of Direct & Cross Examination	Justice Cesilleano L. Sandoval
	1:00 pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Updates in Commercial Laws	Atty. Isabel F. Cruz
	2:30 - 4:30pm	Legal Ethics (2 CU)	The Lawyer's Pledge	Justice Ernesto L. Pineda
April 9, 2005 Saturday	8:00 am	International Law (2 CU)	International Law & the Substance of Moral Authority	Atty. Rodolfo S. Sabacan
	10:15 - 11:45am	MCLE Procedural Subjects Introduction and the Law (1.5 CU)	Rules on Electronic Evidence	Atty. Jose Jesus E. Li
	1:00 pm	MCLE Procedural Subjects Updates in Substantive Laws (1.5 CU)	Reforms in the Bangsamoro Peoples Act	Justice Oscar M. Pimentel
	2:30 - 4:30pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Updates in Criminal Law	Justice Oberdiek L. Peralta
Total Credit Units		36 CU		

Date/Day/Time: March 12 & 19, 2005 and Apr 2 & 9, 2005 Saturdays, from 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM

Inclusions: Meals (morning or afternoon snacks) for half day session plus kit (kit for whole day sessions), Hand outs, Certificate of Attendance & Certificate of Appreciation, Seminar Bag (Yes, Having raffle and numbers, FREE! FREE Parking, Free Xerox/Access of Compliance Report and Submission to the MCLE Office.

Venue: Ballroom II, Folk Arts Center, Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex, (formerly ECDEC), Cmpl. Roxas Ave. Ext., Brgy. Pag-asa, Pasay City

Sponsored by: Chan Robles Law Net, Inc.

Suite 2204-B, 22nd Floor, Philippine Stock Exchange Centre, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Tel. No.: 3022-4344/9411 to 45 Fax No.: 6631-4347/8

Telephone No.: 8925-1555, E-mail Address: lara@chanrobles.com, Website Address: www.chanrobleslawnet.com

Fax this Registration Form to 634-0756 or REGISTER ON-LINE at www.chanrobleslawnet.com

FEE, 3 well attended Sessions: _____ credits 36 credit unit sessions: _____ per each day session.

Name of Participant: _____ Roll No.: _____

Firm Name/Position: _____ /IBP Chapter: _____

Complete Address: _____ Tel. No.: _____

Fax No.: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Delay in gun purchase costing RP, says supplier

By Fe Zamora

THE GOVERNMENT is paying a luxury price for delaying the final approval of a contract to buy M249 light machineguns, or Minimis, agency of the Philippine gun manufacturer have claimed.

The delays have already sent the government more P50 million, according to Randy Limpoco, Philippine representative of Fabrique Nationale Herstal (FNH).

Limpoco said the weakening of the US dollar against the euro meant that the P993.3 million payment price initially approved by the Armed Forces would now be able to buy only 1,840 Minimis, instead of the originally planned 1,730 units.

"And that is direct losses," Limpoco said in a recent interview.

Aside from the financial losses, the review ordered by Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz also violated Republic Act No. 9184, which stipulates that contracts already approved must be implemented within a prescribed period, Limpoco said.

The bayonet point that broke the story about the deal and allegations by a military source that there may have been an overprice in the contract for the Minimis.

Limpoco, dumping any overprice, insisted the basis was for "retaining the lines" and "sustaining the truth" about the contract.

"Good will prevails you sincerity for what you are doing. I feel sorry for you, sister. I will pray for you," Limpoco said in a text message to this reporter.

In previous text messages, Limpoco called Cruz names for ordering the review.

Earlier, in a letter to AFP chief for modernization program Maj. Gen. Roy Rivera, FNH regional sales director Tony Andrysec complained that the delay caused by the review "more than erases FN Herstal in a most difficult and precarious position."

Andrysec said FNH had already started production and that the guns were ready "for acquisition, test and acceptance" at the FNH factory in Herstal.

The FNH in 2003 sold 402 Minimis to the AFP at $5,000.28 each, although the company said the same weapons in the US military for $2,481.50 per, according to documents.

The difference of $2,483.50 each would make the Minimis one of the most expensive weapons in the AFP arsenal, according to a military officer.

Rivera and Limpoco said the Minimis sold to the AFP were more expensive because the deal included accessories, cleaning kits, firelight and insurance charges, among others.

Limpoco defended the contract as advantageous to the AFP because it also included technology transfer and provided the accessories made

Post bond in Garcia case, gov't told

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has ordered the government to post a P1-million bond as it continues to press for the recovery of the alleged ill-gotten wealth of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia (ret.) amounting to some P140 million.

The court, through its fourth division, issued the order after it rejected a motion filed by the office of the Ombudsman seeking to exempt the government from posting a bond for its forfeiture suit it had filed against Garcia.

The court said the "filing of a bond is required in all instances. After all, the suit of one applicant even to the State."

It also noted that "no provision, either in the 1987 Constitution or in Republic Act No. 1379, the anti-ill gotten wealth law, exempts the government from the payment of bonds in civil cases.

The court also stressed "that the government is required like any other applicant to file a bond before recovery of attachment is issued."

The 12-page decision was penned by Justice Jose Hernandez and concurred with by Justices Gregory Ong and Rodolfo Bautista, who make up the fourth division which is hearing the unsubstantiated-wealth case against Garcia.

It was in the same decision that had ordered the sequestration of Garcia's five real estate properties in Batangas belonging to Garcia's son.

Joined by the court were two 500-sq m lots in Barangay San Gregorio, Lemil, Batangas, acquired by the government of being part of Garcia's ill-gotten wealth. The properties were registered in the name of Juan Paolo Garcia.

This was the seventh instant of Garcia's properties since the Sandiganbayan confiscated his Honda CRV and three cars, a resort and camphouse school in his home province of Iloilo, and two real estate properties in Tagaytay City.

Helen P. Flores

A space is reserved for you.
Only until March 18, 2005.

PLDT

Book your ad space in the 2005-2006 PLDT-DPC Metro Manila Telephone Directories.
Call hotline nos. 889-0581, 889-8502 and 889-0503.

Head Office: 3/F Rico 1111 Citra Bldg., Ave. Ext. (formerly Roxas Ave. Ext.), Hanali City • Tel. 889-0000 • Fax 889-0004

DPC

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

Editor Teddyrick S. Melendrez

Castillo jumper lifts P'foods past FedEx

By Jasmine W. Payo

FEDEX import Anthony Miller scores to tie teammate Purefoods' Jiri Lingner on rules a-thon during third game last night.

NOY CASTILLO drained a jumper with 1.7 seconds left to cap a strong comeback Purefoods translated into an exciting 91-90 win over FedEx in the PBA Fiesta Conference yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Castillo wriggled himself out of Wayne Arboleda's tight defense to finish with 17 points and seven assists.

"That play was really for Noy," said coach Ryan Gregorio, whose Hotdogs were down a 15-point deficit in the second quarter. "I really liked it because he was able to shoot it just in time."

The Hotdogs' comeback was also aided by veteran Smith, the 6-foot-10 workhorse who topped scoring with 22 points, including 15 in the second half, and grabbed 22 rebounds despite a sore ear.

"We struggled in the first half due to lack of familiarity," added Gregorio. "But Smith battled us out tremendously hard. I liked his effort on defense, rebounding and his energy."

In the second game, import Dalron Johnson also made an impressive debut by scoring 25 points and grabbing 15 rebounds to lead the Red Bull Barako to a 95-86 victory over last conference's back-to-back champion Barangay Ginebra Kings.

"We did a good job on limiting some of the court," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao of his 6-foot-9 import, who scored "TKO is very efficient player."

Red Bull pulled away from a 79-72 deadlock at the final eight minutes mark by outscoring Ginebra 23-2 in the span four minutes for an 85-72 buffer.

The Barakos also embarrassed the big gunner of Kings guard Mark Caguioa, who finished with a game-high 32 points, and import Eddie Gilmore, who chipped in 22.

Purefoods trailed by nine in the last three minutes, 90-81, but Smith powered his way at the low post to take the lead, 89-88. Castillo then knocked home a three-pointer as the 1:16 mark that narrowed the gap to 91-90.

Smith, who missed seven of his first eight attempts from the stripe, later iced it at 90-after finally making his two throws with 44.5 seconds left.

The Tigresses had a chance to retake the lead but Kerby Raymundo came from behind to block a short hook by import Anthony Miller, giving Purefoods possession with 18.2 seconds remaining and setting up Castillo's game-winning basket.

Bulky asserted poised to stay

INFRACTION DISPUTE

PAL flightmate clears Pagunsan

By Maureen R. Castillo

JUVIC Pagunsan and his caddie at Bonito.

BAGUIO—I didn't do it and we saw to our flight did.

This emphatic denial by Jimpson Lim of Plank Plank, who sought the heaviest yesterday to deny reports that he confirmed the infraction that led to a costly two-stroke penalty on Carlsberg set level Pagunsan in the Philippine Airlines Invitational golf championship that ended here Saturday.

"I want to set the record straight. I was not the one who confirmed (the infraction) and no one in our flight was able to confirm it," Lim said.

Lim, along with Bong Bonito of Southwoods and Joel Ojales of Del Monte, saved Alphonsian of Pagunsan in the third round of play at the Baguio course in the town of Manila.

The supposed infraction came on the 10th hole when Pagunsan supposedly parred with his caddy standing in his line of play, which is an allowed under rules and merited a two-stroke penalty.

Salesman Aida Ayson, who is also the executive director of the National Golf Association of the Philippines, slapped the penalty and reportedly told numerous diverse Buddy Hennessy later that Lim confirmed the caddy's infraction.

"Ayson told him," said Lim. "It a matter of fact, I told John on the 11th so that his Pagunsan's caddy was not in his line of play."

For his part, Ojales said he was not in a position to confirm the violation because he did not see it, although he said his caddy told him that Pagunsan's caddy was standing in a legal angle.

Bobby was the one who called for a statement after Pagunsan missed his par on the par-3 hole. With the two-stroke penalty Pagunsan got a turn on the hole.

The incident and another duo allowed Southwoods to escape with another two-stroke penalty because a loose of concession after Southwoods won the 39th Interclub over Canlubang by only two points.

In the case of Pagunsan, the standard rule, according to Ayson-on, calls for the player to be given the benefit of the doubt when the issue becomes a question of one player's word against another.

He added that while the tournament committee has the power to reverse all decisions by its referees, it did not do so because "there was nothing to be reversed due to the lack of a formal complaint."

Ayson was also the same statement, who declared that Pagunsan for it of Southwoods found his ball in

ASIA INTERNATIONAL AUCTIONEERS, INC.

AiA Trucks & Equipment

4-DAY PUBLIC AUCTION

MARCH 17, 18, 19 & 20, 2005

(Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday)

Sale Starts at 9:00 A.M.

Inspection Dates: March 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16

(Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday)

Your Best Source of Quality Machines in Asia

Over 2,000 items to be sold!

LOWER MAR CAMP ARGUBAT RI HWY, SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE, PHILIPPINES

Tel.: (63-47) 252-1313

Fax: (63-47) 252-6800 / 252-1401

E-mail: asiaint@subictel.com

Register & Register on-line at: www.asia-intl-auctioneers.com

Auction Style PARADE

Join Our Auction and Experience The AIA Advantage

Shell, Caltex, Total raise prices by 50¢

FOLLOWING the lead of their smaller counterparts, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex (Phil. Inc. and Total (PHC) Corp. yesterday hiked the prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos a liter.

Shell and Caltex implemented [illegible] at 12:01 a.m., while Total adjusted its prices at 6 a.m.

The three firms cited the surge in world oil prices as well as court-[illegible] market forces as their reason for pushing up pump prices.

"The high cost of oil in the world market is affecting most countries, from to Indonesia, an oil-exporting country the government had to increase domestic oil prices by 30 percent last week," said Shell general manager for external affairs Rubert Kintanar.

Caltex Petron Corp. country head to hold off on hiking its prices. No announcement had been made as of press time.

The March 1-3 average for the regional benchmark Dubai crude was placed to a high $40.26 a barrel, almost $4 higher than the February average of $36.67 a barrel.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products likewise surged to an average of $37.60 a barrel in the first three days of March, more than $3 higher than last month's average of $34.27 a barrel.

The price of 40PPM-based diesel also soared to a March 1-3 average of $40.51 a barrel, up by almost $3 if with the February average of $37.62 a barrel.

Since the beginning of the year, local gasoline prices had gone up twice by a total of P1.10 a liter. Diesel prices, on the other hand, had risen thrice by a total of P1.30 a liter. —Abigail L. Ilo

Proposed buy-back of Petron shares backed, bucked

By Michael Lim Ubac, Christine C. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Dodo T. Maitem Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau

THE PROPOSAL to buy back the government's majority stake in Petron Corp. is a bid to arrest the skyrocketing pump prices of gasoline and other petroleum products but drawn mixed reactions.

While some congressmen strongly opposed the buy-back of Petron shares, the move was being supported by militant groups.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero told the Inquirer that the government could ill afford such a drastic move due to its huge fiscal deficit.

"We don't have money. Let's start with something that will not cost us additional expenses," said Escudero.

Rep. Pompeyo Pichay (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) said even quitting the majority stake in Petron Corp. would send the wrong signals to international investors who would think that the government was reverting to a regulated regime.

"This will not change even if we buy back Petron, and going back to the previous regime of regulated local fuel prices will have a heavy impact on our budget deficit, not to mention the billions needed for Petron's recapitalization," he said.

At present, the government, through the Philippine National Oil Co., owns a 40-percent stake in Petron with Saudi Aramco controlling the other 40 percent and the public, 20 percent.

Or, Inquirer, Senate President Franklin Drilon received calls for the government to buy back its majority stake, saying this would be the "quick solution" to the ever-rising cost of oil.

Drilon had found an ally in assistant Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran who also expressed support for the buy-back of Petron shares.

"The Philippine government should not be afraid to exercise its eminent domain with foreign investors if it means defending the welfare of the Filipino people against the escalating prices of oil and, consequently, that of basic goods and crucial social services," Beltran said in a statement.

Instead of buying back Petron shares, Escudero wants Congress to review the Oil Deregulation Law.

"The majority supports amending the law and let's see if we can have checks and balances for the benefit of the people," said Escudero.

But Pichay pointed out that a lot of Malacañang in the Senate House were not keen on returning to the deregulated regime where the government played a major role in fixing pump prices.

Malacañang is banking on the energy department's review of the Oil Deregulation Law to find ways to address the escalating price of oil.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday said no discussions had been held on Drilon's proposal to repurchase the majority stake in Petron.

"What we are discussing right now is the review of the Oil Deregulation Law and outgoing Energy Secretary Vincent Perez had created a five-member committee to do this and they are supposed to submit their recommendation for Congressional approval," Bunye said in an interview over DZRH radio.

Give Palace franchise to hike VAT, says Mar

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño
Inquirer

AMID apprehensions the squabble between the Senate and the House of Representatives could affect the proposed value-added tax measure in the bicameral conference committee, Sen. Mar Roxas has proposed granting Malacañang a franchise to raise the VAT.

Roxas said he would endorse a proposal granting President Macapagal-Arroyo a franchise to increase the VAT rate on goods and services from 10 to 12 percent if the Senate and the House failed to agree on a new VAT rate.

"Assuming we cannot agree on the VAT upward into adjustment, we would have a CHIP reform," [illegible] that would give the Chief Executive the flexibility to increase the VAT rate," he said in a statement.

"That is better than a TWIT internal bill that would rely solely on the scrapping of VAT exemptions to generate the desired new revenues needed to address the government's financial difficulties," he said.

Roxas chairs the Senate committee on economic affairs, and serves the said committee.

On Saturday, Senate President Franklin Drilon said he expected a "very difficult" bicameral conference over the VAT because of [illegible] feelings and expressed the fear the issue could result in a deadlock unless the Senate and House vote was settled.

Sen. Ralph Recto, who will sponsor his committee report on the VAT bill today for floor debate action and debates, however, doused fears of a possible deadlock between the two chambers in the bicameral conference committee.

"Both houses will overcome the issue of the budget. We were, the findings will run high, but those will be ironed in the coming weeks," said Recto.

Recto has proposed the existing 10 percent VAT rate be maintained but would lift the VAT exemptions enjoyed by independent power producers, airlines, shipping companies and others. The move fetches an increase from 10 to 12 percent.

"I'm not so much worried about the bicameral conference. What I'm worried about is the publics reaction to the measure. Will they accept it?" he added in a phone interview.

Roxas, chair of the committee on ways and means, had voiced confidence the Senate would reach a compromise with the House on the VAT bill.

Malacañang was also confident Congress would be able to pass the VAT measure before it goes on recess for the Lenten break on March 19.

"We have total confidence in the determination of our Congressional leaders to pass the VAT measure before Congress takes a break," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"I think that is enough time for the Senate to pass its version of the VAT," Bunye said in an interview over DZRH radio.

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 4 issue, the headline story — "Group Senate, House vulgar" — misstated the length of Pagtig Pinoy Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano's tenure in the House of Representatives. Cayetano is not a complete congressman, he is only in the third [illegible] not votes as congressman, having first been elected to the Senate in 1998.

• • •

IN THE MARCH 4 issue, a Business story on Page B2 — "Insurance sector too heavily taxed, says study" — misstated that the author of the study, Edwin S. Pineda, used be owned an insurance company. Pineda, a senior economist at University of Asia and the Pacific, never owned or operated an insurance company. This should remove any impression that his was a vested advocacy in the insurance industry was still serving and biased.

• • •

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to Gerry Celis, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Pinaglabanan, Cubao, Metro Manila; current Manila; Fax No. [illegible]; e-mail address [illegible]; Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Pangalangan, Inquirer ombudsman. All news editors and the reporters on them of the city editor and e-mail address [illegible]

Rebel leader says Reds may put up own media

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCBAN CITY—Should Congress legislate media interviews on the revolutionary movement, communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said the insurgency would have no option but to put up their own underground media network.

"Like... our own clandestine radio stations and [the] publication of revolutionary newspapers, aside from the present existing regional news journals," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

The Communist Party of the Philippines regularly publishes "ang Bayan," the official news organ of the revolutionary movement.

On Friday, the military said it may recommending stiff penalties against media organizations that interviewed known terrorists in the proposed antiterrorism law.

Armed Forces of the Philippines deputy chief of staff Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan's suggestion to impose the penalties earned official weight, AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual told reporters yesterday.

"That is an official input of the Armed Forces" to the proposed antiterrorism bill, Pascual said.

Rosal in a statement said, "In pushing for the interview ban, the Arroyo regime wants to ban revolutionaries from broadcasting their ideas. They now want the Filipino journalist to be accepted to them 'yes sir, sabihin' with no questions asked."

Leftist groups also assailed the military for its proposal.

"The military aims to silence [on] the media. The ban is tantamount to curbing media organizations should be the mouthpieces of the government and military," Robert de Castro, Bayan Muna deputy secretary general, said in a statement.

For its part, the militant federalist group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Sosyalistang ng Pilipinas urged the media not to "disorient the masses "and regard the guerrilleros plot to criminalize objectivity, truth and honesty in gendering reporting."

With Doris C. Bongcaya

Villar wants telcos probed on unused cell phone loads

SEN. MANUEL Villar is seeking a Senate inquiry into the legality of telecommunication firms' practice of forfeiting to their favor the unused stored value of pre-paid cellular phone cards bought by their subscribers.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on finance, has filed Senate Resolution 200 directing the committee on public services to open an inquiry into the "unused value forfeiture policy" adopted by a number of telecommunication companies.

The policy, he said, could be a violation of Republic Act No. 7925, which provides that rates of telecom firms "must be fair, reflective of a fair return on their investments, reasonable and have been discovered."

"It came to my attention that the value of pre-paid cards that phone subscribers buy if not consumed or used within a certain period of time, are being forfeited in favor of the telecom companies. The forfeited values are then included in their operating revenue," Villar said in a statement.

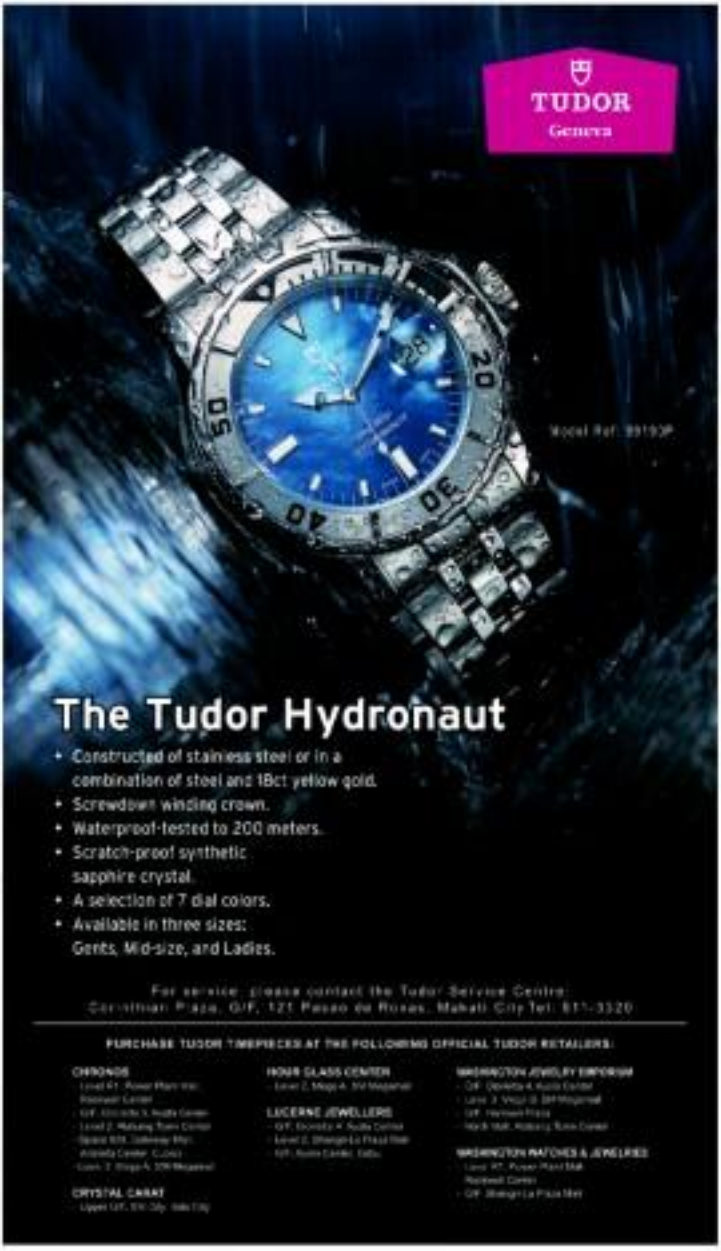
"I would like to know whether such policy or practice violates certain laws," he said.

In his resolution, Villar cited the practice of Globe Telecom of putting a 15-day limit on the use of P300-denominated pre-paid cards and a 60-day limit on P250 to P1,000 pre-paid cards.

Smart Communications, on the other hand, sets a three-day limit on the use of its P50 sum-load, a six-day limit on P60 sum-load, 12-day limit on P135 sum-load, 30-day limit on P200 sum-load, and 60-day limit on P900, P500 and P1,000-denominated cell cards, he said.

Villar said he found the time limit on pre-paid cards "too short," especially for low-income earners.

DJ Enriquez



Congress casualty of intra-chamber fight over budget

From page A1

From this perspective, the executive has clearly been the beneficiary of the intra-parliamentary conflict.

The issue in this intra-chamber war does not center on differences seen the House and Senate versions of the budget bill but stems from the Senate bypass of the bicameral conference committee. The committee's function is to resolve the differences in the Senate and House versions of a bill.

The bypass thereby rendered redundant the bicameral conference, a hallowed legislative procedure.

The facts of this controversy are by now well known and their details need no repetition.

For the sake of brevity, the senators have claimed that House members are up to mischief because their alleged plan to restore cuts in their pork barrel had been foiled by the bypass.

On the other hand, House members have claimed that the Senate abbreviated the process after sending its own deal with Mr Arroyo by realigning the cuts in the President's intelligence funds to the senators' pork barrel, which had also been reduced.

Single chamber assembly

To forget, some House members have called for the abolition of the Senate and the conversion of the legislature into a single chamber assembly, thereby removing the (seriously) call for the adoption of the parliamentary system, which is irrelevant to the current dispute.

This call is in itself a manifestation of the muddled minds that inhabit Congress.

Abolition of budgetary positions is a favorite threat members of Congress hurl at supplicants at budgetary hearings where department secretaries and bureau directors, who offend the congressmen, are browbeaten and humiliated.

So, it is not surprising that members of the House are threatening to abolish the Senate, which is co-equal with the House, to the legislature's own system of intra-chamber checks and balances. Besides, they cannot threaten senators with impeachment.

Unfortunately this tactic which works so well on easily intimidated bureaucrats, has not worked with the senators, many of whom seem to look down on their lower parliamentary fellows as a bunch of immoral sots and spoiled brats.

In reality, there are quite a number of congressmen who give the lie to this populist stereotype.

Executive unscathed

In this intra-chamber war, Congress is the casualty while the President has escaped unscathed. At the same time, Mr Arroyo has gotten what she has wanted—passage of the budget with an up-to-date outlook rather than a measured budget that by its very nature contains programs designed to boost economic growth.

The bruised House squabble also reveals the malignancy of the sub-culture of applying the notion of checks and balances to the extreme—within the legislature and outside the framework of checks and balances among the executive, Congress and the Supreme Court.

In the hickering, what is revealed is that within the tripartite system, there exist a sub-layer in the legislature where elites is to create excitement in law-making.

The potential for stalemates gives the President the opportunity to use divide-and-rule tactics on Congress. The discord over the budget has provided ammunition to the argument that Congress has become redundant and that strengthening executive power is the key to a government that delivers the goods.

Destructive

For this reason, the House and the Senate should stop their silly dispute that is destructive to both chambers.

The Senate action was reportedly motivated by the possibility of having a third consecutive budget since 2001, with its deleterious effects on the economy, and by the paltry consideration that the senators faced the prospect of being denied their plum for Easter holiday break if the budget bill had to go through another indefinite delay in the bicameral conference.

The House had allegedly stalled the conference committee reportedly because the lower chamber might use it as a bargaining venue for the restoration of pork barrel cuts, holding hostage the bill increasing the value-added tax, an urgent revenue measure.

The controversy puts under the spotlight the flaws of the bicameral conference. It has been shown that in the case of the 2005 budget, the conference has become the tryout for bicameral reading that should have taken place in the process of congressional hearings, the plenary debates, and the passage of bills on second and finally on third reading.

The passage in the Senate of the budget deficit cap makes the bicam's compliance that the passage of the bill increasing the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent has been assured.

The VAT bill cannot avoid the bicameral conference where the horse-trading is bound to reappear in a more vicious form as a result of the Senate maneuver. It can easily be hijacked by their voracious rival.

The Daily Gospel

Monday, March 7, 2005
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Is 65:17-21
Gospel: John 4:43-54

In those days Jesus left Samaria for Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet is recognized in his own country. Yet the Galileans welcomed him when he arrived, because of all the things he had done in Jerusalem during the festival; and when they had seen, on the day, too, before the festival.

Jesus went back to Cana of Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. At Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill, and when he heard that Jesus had come from Judaea to Galilee, he went and asked him to come and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus said, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe!" The official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." And Jesus replied, "Go, your son is living."

The man had faith in the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. He was already going down the hills and some of his servants met him with the news, "Your son has recovered!" So he asked them at what time the child had begun to recover and they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh minute of noon." And the father realized that it was at that very hour that Jesus said to him, "Your son is living." And he became a believer he and all his family.

Jesus performed this second miraculous sign when he returned from Judaea to Galilee.

Commentary:

Jesus finds the son of the official. He assures him: his grief and the crowd seeing that everyone would sign for themselves, rather than to believe to him, his words and his presence. The man believes in Jesus' word and he and his whole family become believers. How many times have we been healed cured, saved for by God—and we do not believe his word to us in Jesus? Do we listen and hear the word of the Scripture and immediately go to obey—with our sending proof or some sign of Jesus' goodness and power. Do we make our lives daily on the Word of God? Scripture and Sacrament? Do we decide to put it into practice and make it come true in our lives. Jesus, may we believe in you and know you not for what you would do for us, but because you are Truth.

Christian Publications, Inc., FMBoard, Inc. (FB) Sgt. Esguerra Ave., Quezon City, P.O. Box 4, Baguio City, Quezon City, Tel. 724-1644; Fax: 724-1630; E-mail: cpi@cpi.ph; Website: http://www.cbfnet.com/cpi; Philippine Copyright 2005 (cpi@cpi.ph); permission granted to use in the Philippines

Supreme Court Doctrines

JUDICIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Service by registered mail—The rule is that service by registered mail is complete on the actual receipt thereof by the addressee, except when the addressee does not claim his mail within five days from the date of the first notice of the postmaster, in which case, the service shall take effect within the said period. The fact that from the postmaster would be the latest recourse is never that the notice had been validly made. However, if there is nothing in record showing how, when, and to whom, the delivery of the registry notice of the registered mail was made, the court should not rely on the notation "return to sender: unclaimed" to support the postmaster's certification of notice given to and by petitioners, a copy of the January 4, 1993 Order of the trial court was sent to and received by their counsel on January 14, 1993. A copy of the same order was placed on a sealed brown envelope addressed to the petitioners. The records also contain a registry notice addressed to the petitioners. There is no showing that the notice was sent to or received by the petitioners. In fact, petitioners were not required to submit to the trial court a certificate from the postmaster stating that the clerk of court sent a notice of registered mail to the petitioners' counsel and that the latter received the notice. Instead, the trial court declared the petitioners as to default for their counsel's failure to appear for pre-trial and to file their brief three days before February 16, 1993. The trial court erred in declaring the petitioners as in default, in refusing the respondent to adduce its evidence ex parte, and in rendering judgment by default against the petitioners. [Cite since omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Ruling en Comercio vs. CA, G. R. No. 126275, November 11, 2004]

By: E. E. Viray

Keep price of rice within reach of poor, GMA orders NFA

With the country bracing for more frequent petroleum price hikes, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the National Food Authority to make sure the price of rice would remain at its present levels.

In a statement, the President ordered that NFA rice be sold at an ex-warehouse price of P 16/kg for ordinary regular milled rice and P18/kg for special well-milled rice for the first half of the year.

Mrs. Arroyo also directed the NFA to ensure that government rice would be accessible to the public at all times at all of its accredited outlets nationwide.

"All available means must be explored to keep (rice) within (the) reach of the poor," the President said.

"If necessary," part of the funds is to be generated by the new tax measures would be used to subsidize the price of rice, she said.

NFA officials yesterday said former the Philippines had bought 400,000 tons of rice for April-May delivery with 250,000 tons coming from Vietnam.

The officials said the Philippines also bought 200,000 tons of 25 percent broken rice recently from Vietnamese suppliers at $264.47 (roughly P15,000) per ton, including cost and freight.

Trading firms Noble Grain and Thai Hajeera Trading Co. Ltd. won contracts to supply 20,000 tons each of the same variety of rice at $259.25 per ton and $263.51 per ton, respectively, Reuters reported. (Reuters © Bernadette Reuters)

The WORLD

Edito Lorenzo B. Suarez

Syria vows swift pullout from Lebanon

BEIRUT—Syria vowed a swift two-phased withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon in what the Lebanese press described on Sunday as a historic move opening a new chapter after 29 years of Syrian domination.

Under intense global pressure, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad announced plans on Saturday for a complete pullout but said Damascus would still play a role in its tiny neighbor.

Lebanon greeted Assad's announcement with moments of delight in central Beirut, while opposition figures in Lebanon and European leaders cautiously described the move as positive.

But Washington, which says Syrian "support for terrorism" impedes Middle East peace, dismissed the plan as inadequate and reiterated its call for a complete and immediate withdrawal.

"We woke up in Lebanon today to a new political reality, the opening of a new phase in the country's history," its daily newspaper said in a front-page editorial. Al-Mustaqbal daily labelled the announcement "a historic event."

Under mounting international pressure and faced with daily protests inside Lebanon to end its security presence, Assad told parliament Syria's troops would initially pull back to the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon and then to the border area.

"By this measure Syria would have fulfilled its commitment toward the 'full removal and implementation (UN Security Council) Resolution 1559,'" he said.

The Taif Accord ended Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war and, among other points, stipulated the withdrawal of Syrian troops from most of the country within two years. Resolution 1559, adopted last September by the UN Security Council at the initiative of the United States and France, called for foreign troops to quit Lebanon completely.

Syrian Cabinet Minister Bothaina Shaaban said troops would withdraw to the Syrian side of the border "as soon as possible logistically" and that a meeting between the two countries' leaders on Monday would agree on the details, including timing.

Syrian troops have been in Lebanon since intervening in the civil war in the 1970s, and it currently has about 14,000 troops there, down from 40,000.

"Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon does not mean the absence of Syria's role," Assad said. "Syria's strength and its role in Lebanon is not dependent on the presence of its forces in Lebanon."

Damascus has viewed Lebanon as a strategic asset and key economic outlet for decades.

But it has come under growing Lebanese, Arab and wider pressure to quit the country since the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri last month. Many pointed the finger at Syria, which denies any role in the killing.

Lebanon's main opposition leader Walid Jumblatt said Assad's speech was a "positive start ... One hands are extended with the assurance on a timetable for the withdrawal." The United States, Syria's most vocal critic, said Assad's pledge to pull back had not gone far enough.

"We want complete withdrawal—to full internal borders," said White House spokesperson Sean Scully.

France, Britain and the European Union called Assad's announcement a first step toward full withdrawal.

UN special envoy Terje Roed-Larsen is expected to go to Beirut and Damascus this week to discuss the "full, complete and immediate implementation of (security council) Resolution 1559."

Iran said it suspected any joint Syrian-Lebanese decision, though it did not want Lebanon's unity or sovereignty endangered. Reuters

LEBANESE protesters wave their national flag as they watch on a giant screen in the Martyrs Square the address by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad saying that Syria would pull its troops in Lebanon back to the eastern Bekaa Valley and close to the border. AFP

Chavez says he has evidence Washington plotting his assassination

NEW DELHI—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on Saturday he had evidence that the United States was planning to assassinate him, an accusation that a US official quickly denied.

"We have enough evidence. ... If anything happens to me, the person responsible will be the president of the United States," Chavez told reporters in New Delhi. He did not offer any evidence.

In comments published Saturday by local media in Caracas, the US ambassador to Venezuela, William Brownfield, said his country had "no plans or thoughts of assassinating either the president here or any other leader."

"That would be a violation of our legal culture," added Brownfield.

The exchange of accusations between the left-wing Chavez and US officials has reached fever pitch in recent weeks, raising questions whether the multibillion-dollar energy relationship between Washington and one of its top oil suppliers is at risk.

On Friday in New Delhi, Chavez said his country would not stop supplying oil to the United States unless "the US government gets a little bit crazy and tries to hurt us."

Brownfield said geographical proximity made the United States and Venezuela "natural" trade partners but added: "If the United States doesn't buy oil from Venezuela, we'll buy oil from an other country, and if Venezuela doesn't sell oil to the US, it'll sell oil to another country."

Venezuela's Foreign Minister Ali Rodriguez told the Organization of American States last month that US accusations against Chavez were a sign of an impending attack.

Washington dismissed what it termed these "wild charges." Reuters

Thousands in Taiwan rally vs China antisecession law

JIACHUENG, Taiwan—Tens of thousands of Taiwanese rallied Sunday in southern Taiwan to protest China's plans to enact an antisecession law aimed at preventing the island from declaring formal independence.

The angry crowd organized by the ruling Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) burned a huge Chinese flag before former President Lee Teng-hui, now the party's leader, spoke.

As the Chinese communists are increasingly worried about the growing desire of Taiwan people wanting to be master of their own, Beijing decided to enact the antisecession law," said Lee.

Taiwan is part of the world, but not "never part of China," he said.

The crowds, estimated by police at around 20,000, held banners and chanted slogans while marching in southern Taichung city, a stronghold of the island's pro-independence movement.

"Opposing annexation, safeguarding Taiwan," the demonstrators shouted.

Some 48 percent of Taiwanese want formal independence from China and 68 percent said they would fight for the cause if war breaks out, according to a survey released in December by the television network TVBS.

"As people of a free and democratic country, we must come out to defend our right, or we might become the slaves of an authoritarian country," Lee said.

Beijing is planning to pass the law at the end of a full session of its National People's Congress, or parliament, on March 14.

The TSU threatened to mount an "environmental" law if China ignored demands to drop its proposed legislation.

In the northern capital city of Taipei, a gathering by the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) drew at least 1,000 protesters.

"Taiwan is an independent sovereign state. Taiwan and China are two separate countries," DPP secretary general Lee Yi-yang said. AFP

Submarine exercise may have killed dolphins in US

WASHINGTON—The US government has launched an investigation into whether the mass beaching of dolphins in south Florida this past week was caused by naval exercises involving a submarine equipped with sonar, officials said late Saturday.

More than 80 disoriented dolphins swam into sickle-deep waters off the Florida Keys near the town of Marathon last Wednesday, prompting a rescue effort that involved hundreds of volunteers.

Some mammals have been successfully led back to deep water, but about two dozen others have already died or have been euthanized to stop their suffering. Most dolphins are being taken care of by biologists and park rangers.

Nobody knows exactly at this point what caused the dolphins to beach.

But US Navy and environmental officials said they were looking into the possibility that sonar exercises involving the USS Philadelphia, a Los Angeles-class attack submarine, had anything to do with the tragic events.

"The Navy takes this very seriously and is, of course, interested in the outcome" of the investigation, Rear Admiral Gregg Smith, a spokesperson for the US Fleet Forces Command, told AFP in a telephone interview from Norfolk, Virginia.

He said the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was leading the probe, but the military was "concerned" about the incident and was providing full cooperation as they wait for the results of necropsies. AFP

Freed Italian hostage says US shooting in Iraq was unjustified

ROME—Freed Italian hostage Giuliana Sgrena said on her return from Iraq Saturday that the shooting by US soldiers which left her wounded and an Italian intelligence officer dead was not justified, as Rome insisted on explanations of the incident from Washington.

The firing on the road to Baghdad airport left Friday threatened to cast a pall over relations between Rome and Washington, which are close allies in the Iraq conflict.

US ambassador to Italy Mel Sembler told Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi he had asked Washington for an urgent explanation of what happened.

"Everything will be done to shed full light on the incident," which ended Sgrena's month-long ordeal, a statement issued by Berlusconi's office read according to reports.

Sgrena, the 56-year-old correspondent of the communist daily Il Manifesto, told Italian investigators the US troops' account for had been in no way justified by the speed of her car, ANSA news agency said.

"Our vehicle was running at normal speed when it suddenly found itself under fire," she said, rejecting US fears of a possible suicide attack.

"It wasn't a checkpoint, but a patrol which immediately opened fire after they scanned their light on us," Sgrena said.

The US military said Friday Sgrena's car was not had ignored signals to stop, and that US soldiers had warned their hands and also flashed white lights and fired warning shots in a failed attempt to get the vehicle to stop.

But Sgrena told Italian television late Friday that a "hail of bullets" rained down on the car taking her to safety at Baghdad airport, along with three Italian intelligence officers, killing one of them.

"I was speaking to Jeffrey Harsh, Calipari (...) when he heard us on, probably in protest me, and then collapsed and I realised he was dead," said Sgrena, who was being questioned on Saturday by two Italian magistrates.

"They continued shooting and the driver couldn't even explain that we were Italians. It was really horrible," she added.

Il Manifesto chief editor Gabriele Polo branded the intelligence officer's death a "murder."

Calipari's body was repatriated late Saturday to Rome where his coffin was carried from a military plane amid full military honors at Ciampino airport.

He is to lie in state in the Vittorio ceremonial monument Sunday and will be given a state funeral in Rome Monday.

Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and Pope John Paul II hailed the 51-year-old head of Italy's military intelligence mission in Iraq as "a hero" who saved Sgrena's life.

"The most difficult moment was when I saw the person who saved my life die in my arms," said Sgrena after her return to Rome earlier Saturday.

Amid anger in Italy at the violent end to Sgrena's month-long ordeal, US President George W. Bush promised a full investigation into the incident.

Berlusconi, a staunch Bush ally, told a press conference in Rome late Friday there was troubling questions that needed to be answered.

Meanwhile, about 300 anti-globalisation protesters gathered outside the US Embassy here and exhibited for a withdrawal of the 3,000 Italian troops from Iraq. Berlusconi's resignation and support for Calipari's family.

Sgrena, her left shoulder in a bandage, flew into Rome on a government plane Saturday morning and was immediately rushed to Celio military hospital where she will undergo surgery within the next few days. She had been given emergency treatment in a US military hospital in Baghdad. AFP

ITALIAN journalist Giuliana Sgrena disembarks with help from this plane which took her from Baghdad to Rome March 5.

No women's day in Saudi amid ultra-conservatism

By Ali Khalil

RIYADH—As women worldwide celebrate their international day Saudi women continue to be subjected to strict restrictions in their ultra-conservative society, although some are becoming increasingly vocal in demanding freedom.

Saudi Arabia is the desert kingdom that sits on a quarter of world oil reserves are barred on every from head to toe in public, are banned from driving, and cannot travel without a written permission from their male guardian.

In a rare gesture, a female member of the royal family slammed the strict conservatism for being the cause of restrictions on women and called on the kingdom's government to reinforce them in order to empower women.

"They (government) have to reinforce them," Princess Sarah bint Talal said, referring to influential conservatives in Saudi Arabia.

"The government has to recognize us as an equal half of society.

This equal half has rights," Princess Sarah told AFP.

Such rights go beyond driving and voting to include equal rights in "trust", (especially) in divorce cases, trade, and in making school, big for women obligatory in every village in the kingdom," she said.

The kingdom applies a strict form of Sunni Islam known as "Wahhabism," which follows the interpretations of the 18th century scholar Mohammad bin Abdul Wahhab.

The Arabian scholar and his followers say women to have played a pivotal role in the history of the kingdom, and required an almost free hand in ensuring religious affairs.

But the outspoken princess believes that the government should have the ability to restrain some violence.

"Change should be (brought) a political decision," said Princess Sarah, daughter of maverick Prince Talal bin Abdul Aziz, a half brother of King Fahd, whose outspoken views on democracy have clashed with other members of the Saudi royal family.

Although they were allowed to obtain separate identity cards a few years ago, women still need a male guardian to apply for the ID on their behalf.

"I want to exist as a human being," Suzanne al-Chanem, an executive director of a female-run NGO, protested.

Chanem said she wants to be able to take decisions concerning her life by herself, including being able to rent a house or buy a car on her own.

"I always have to follow someone (male relative) regardless of my age," Chanem complained, adding that her 60-year-old grandmother was forced to accept her 19-year-old grandson as a male guardian, being the only male left in the family.

Chanem used to celebrate women's day by getting together with other female friends but said she gave up as "nothing changed year after year."

In addition to historical restrictions, Saudi women have been barred from three-stage landmark municipal elections which kicked off last month. Legislative elections were cited as the cause by officials, who promised to facilitate female participation in the next elections.

But women who get their chance to complain do not hide their frustration, even male dominance.

"No matter how much a woman achieves in terms of education and work, and regardless of her age, there is always male guardianship," said Maha al-Munaf, saying that she still needs her husband's permission to travel even though she is a department deputy head at a big local hospital. AFP

Altas dethrone Admirals; Lady Eagles triumph

By Mart Anthony Reyes

DOMAGUETE CITY—(Easter coverage)

University of Perpetual Help-Rizal got back at defending champion Philippine Maritime Institute via a dramatic 73-69 overtime triumph to wrest the 2005 National Students' senior championship before a rollicking crowd at the Lamberto Macias gym.

The victory, the Altas' first ever here, was all the more memorable because it was fashioned out at about the same time the Altas' head coach Ben Grimbol was exchanging wedding vows in Bohol City.

The scene at either this or a gift to coach Ruy," said assistant coach Conrado Ruiz, whose coach bested to the tournament in last year's final to Lourdes City. "Finally we were able to get backat them."

It turned out to be a frustrating day for PMI as the Lady Admirals also went down to Ateneo, 53-52, in their showdown for the women's title earlier.

Playing third in the senior division was National University, which nipped Southwith City College-Dasmariñas, 84-82.

Philippine Christian University actually set the tone for the emergence of new champions by dethroning pastime-elite San Beda Intercollege Sagittarius.

Chris Sanconiento came through with a

Bedalpuno scattered a game-high 28 points but five of their eight fellow-starters recorded double-figures-level by Junior Hopkins.

Khalil Ibtiz, who almost won it for the Altas in regulation by banging in Perpetual's last seven points, finished with 15.

Meanwhile, the Basketball Association of the Philippines announced that the Asean Intercollegiate basketball championships in June will also be held here.

The scores

First Game (Finals)

ATENEO 53—Ramirez 18, Chu S. 9, Villanueva 6, Carpio 5, Ilao 4, Guajardo 4, Tenorio 4, Santos 2, Ancil 0

PMI 68—Ibañez 15, Galvante 10, De Guzman 8, Gerasmio 6, Reynaldo 5, Jimon 5, Amerman 4, Ig. G. Montejo 4.

Quarters: 6-8, 20-13, 34-32, 53-52

Second Game

IEC 84—Flores III, D. Calanoren 18, C. Calanoren 18, Mahinay 16, Fernandez 8, Ando 4, Obedoza 4, Dela Cruz 4, Sanchez 2, Bakradanda 2, Jordan 2

MUAD 82—Cordero 29, Lander 18, Bernabeu 11, Ignacio 6, Diaz 5, Ian 5, Abendanio 3, Fuentes 3, Salazar 2, Gamboa 0, Ebarle 0

Third Game

PERPETUAL 82—Jose 18, Mina 16, Salazaro 14, Rocker 12, Bañez 9, Arce 7, Mendoza 5, Santos 0

PMI 68—Rodriguez III 17, Santarosa 15, Soriano 13, Dublo 7, Ibañez 4, Villanueva 4, Hospedales 2, Calderon 1

Quarters: 17-13, 28-32, 51-47, 84-68 (ingo, 57-69

Que salvages top 10 finish despite a 78

PHUKET, Thailand—Angelo Que completely lost his sizzling form in the third round, salvaging only a six-over par 78 Sunday to finish tied for 10th in the $500,000 Thailand Open.

Que, winner of the Mirinae Open last year, stumbled with two double bogeys on the front nine and two bogeys on the back to wind up at 286 in the company of Jeev Milkha Singh of India (70) and Danny Balin (Swiss) Fabrizio (71).

QUE loses his touch.

It was a disappointing setback for Que, who started with rounds of 71-70 before shooting a five-birdie, no-bogey 67 Saturday to move within a stroke of the leaders going into the final round.

Defending champion Gregory Havret of New Zealand rallied with a four-under 70 on the Blue Canyon course to defeat Rune of Australia (72) after 72 holes at 279.

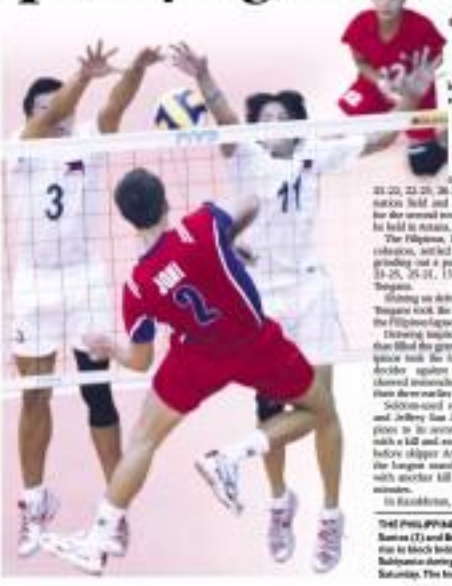
Que, ranked 144th in the Asian Order of Merit with earnings of $27,104.69 so far, hit the turn at four over following back-to-back double bogeys on the 2nd side.

He lost ground further with bogeys on the 12th and 14th although he is expected to move up in the overall race with his top 10 finish.

Fellow Cebu Caucasian Gonzaga Escalante Jr. is six-way deadlock for 57th place with a 77—296.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Gonzales, who won last week's MSC Open in Hawaii, withdrew for still undisclosed reasons after shooting a two-over par 74 in the first round of the Honeywell Classic in Mexico.

Chinese-Taipei rules world qualifying; RP clinches 3rd



By Ray Luarca

CEBU CITY—A thin line separates Chinese Taipei from Indonesia. A bigger gap exists between them, the Philippines and the rest of the field in the Men's Volleyball World Championship Asia Pool C qualifying that ended at the University of San Carlos Gym here yesterday.

The Taiwanese, showing why they're world ranked, bowed the Indonesians, the perennial region-al champions, 25-17, 23-25, 25-23, 28-26, to sweep the five-match field and emerge top contender for the second round of eliminations to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in June.

The Filipinos, lacking in setting and cohesion, settled for third place after grinding out a pulsating 23-27, 25-20, 31-29, 25-21, 15-12 victory over the Thailand.

Shining on defense, the taller, bulkier Taiwanese took the first and third sets as the Filipinos lagged in recovery.

Drowning inspiration from 5,200 fans that filled this gym to the rafters, the Filipinos took the fourth set, forcing the decider when Indonesia captain Ade showed tremendous improvement from there on to earn the victory.

Seldom-used setter Jenky Remos and Jeffrey San Jose lifted the Philippines to its second win in four starts with a kill and an ace for a 14-13 lead, before skipper Ariel de la Cruz sealed the longest stretch of the tournament with another kill after 1 hour and 40 minutes.

In Kazakhstan, the Taiwanese, rated 36th worldwide, will be hyphened with the hosts, the South Koreans and two other squads.

Indonesia wound up second with a 3-win, 1-loss steel and also advanced to another second-round qualifier against China, host India and two other teams.

Asian Games veteran Hsiao Chen-Ho presided over the Taiwanese assault with 20 points and combined with Lien Chien-chih to overhaul a six-point deficit in the fourth set.

"We have a very tight game today," said Chinese Taipei coach Ma Sun Chang. "It's our first game against Indonesia but we are confident of beating them from the start."

Chang, however, praised the Indons, who are considered in the world despite being six-time Southeast Asian Games champions.

"They (Indons) are good and I think they will also play good in the second round," said Chang. "They have a good defense and I'm sure they can put up a good fight against China and India."

After taking the first two sets, the Taiwanese were nearly upstaged by the Indons' defensive wall composed of six-footers Muhammad Zainudin, Hyronus Hadi Hyrana and Rudy Setiono.

The tournament was sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Supplitoy and 2Go, Bacolod Energy Drink, PCSO, Cebu Mercury and Convenience Bureau, Sogo Hotel, Tanduk.com, Air Philippines, Speed Magazine, Pepsi, Gatorade and White Rooster Phils.

THE PHILIPPINES' Ceasel delos Santos (3) and Bonifacio Lingat (11) rise to block Indonesian pair Sukiyanto during their match last Saturday. The Indons prevailed.

PAL flightmate ...

(Turn to page A11)

hit from the 15th tee after a search of only four minutes and 30 seconds. Former Cantabrang star Tommy Manotoc clinched the ball was found way past the allowed five minutes.

The penalty for a lost ball is two strokes, so worst an ecpa the hole for two points.

"With a clear conscience, I raised by my declaration," Apacible said after the round Friday

---

Advice to Erik Morales, from Sugar Ray

EGGER Ray Leonard said it very, very subtly.

The seven-punching legend took extra care not to offend.

Leonard would've told Manny Pacquiao to play it smart, but intelligently when they met on Thursday at the Wild Card Boxing Club.

In grade school parlance, that's so harsh as telling the dumb kid to "Use your common, dame. It." If you can't, "Better go home and plant onions."

Leonard, however, played it like a too-covered father.

He merely mentioned with his tender finger to deliver his message.

"You should also use this," said Leonard as quoted by Winchell Campos in California.

Campos said Leonard "pointed to his head to indicate that half of the battles on top of the ring are won because of mental preparation and toughness."

Campos said Pacquiao nodded sombly to complete the session.

Well, as had been previously noted, Pacquiao may not feel very comfortable with what Leonard had offered.

No, I did not say Pacquiao is not a thinking fighter.

He may not be as heady as, say, Leonard or Erik Morales, but he has shown enough to last in the ring through the years.

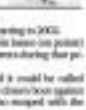
But, more than his head, Pacquiao will be relying on his thinking fists when he clashes with Morales in Las Vegas 12 days from now.

Pacquiao has dropped six of his last seven opponents starting in 2002.

Morales, on the other hand, had only three

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad



losses in eight fights starting in 2002.

Morales also suffered two losses (on points) against Marco Antonio Barrera during that period.

The only black mark, if it could be called such, for Pacquiao was the close-to-loss against Juan Manuel Marquez who escaped with the aid of hardly scoring last May.

***

Pacquiao is clearly ahead in the knockout department.

But not everybody is happy at the wild manner his camp has been hyping Pacquiao's supposed edge over Morales.

In fact, fight expert Bernie Nieves had seen to suggest Morales must see his fazed by the taunts from Pacquiao and his handlers.

And father Nieves, who has penned numerous scoops overnight: "Despite the insistence of Manny's horde of a quick ending in his favor when he takes on terrible Erik, a conclusive ending is likely to happen to the late nomads. Morales will show up for his assigned March 19 showdown with Pacquiao hype notwithstanding. It will be a terrific battle for aficionados for sure). Hope Manny will check in fully armed (as you've repeatedly assured) with the right pair of socks this time."

Now, as the countdown for the Pacquiao-Morales encounter nears, fans should be watching Sugar Ray rehash arts now.

Why? Because Pacquiao, rumored to be easy he, also tends to drop this guard when he starts to fuck at his foe inside the ring.

He has the tendency to tire his head, so to say, thereby making the leonard tip very timely.

***

In my case, I could only thank journalist Winchell Campos who has painstakingly stuck to Pacquiao.

The most delicious details of Pacquiao's close encounter with Sugar Ray Leonard couldn't escaped an ordinary scribe.

But Campos was not the sort to drop his pants before would celebrities.

He did not think his hot, he has grown only offered vital details from the Pacquiao camp in the run-up to the monumental March 19 showdown.

Anyway, if Campos could find time, he may still Leonard what he could advise Erik Morales.

Like throwing Leonard, he's not expected to offer the same tip he had given Pacquiao.

That is just a guess. But I bet Leonard would tell Morales: Wield a bigger punch, man.

Show up with an ear, if you can, not with plies and bruises.

Maybe Leonard should explain that it does not always pay for a boxer to be too brainy in front of a certified entertainer.

It's a win, win, a plain defeat, Morales will have against the five-breathing Pacquiao.

It won't be a walk.

It pays to think and sock-and-roll at the same time.

LADIES FED GOLF

Tagaytay Highlands gets back at MGC

Standings

Group 1 (Division) 161.0. Tagaytay Highlands 5-0-1; Manila Golf 5-1-0; Wack 1-5-0

Group 2 (In Order) 5-1-0; Forest Hills 4-0-1; Southwoods 3-1-1; Valley 0-5-0

TAGAYTAY Highlands reserved sweet revenge on Manila Golf Club as it swept the morning 5-0 rout to home recently to move closer to a semifinals berth in the inaugural Ladies' Federation Golf League matches.

All three matches didn't go further than the 16th hole as the Highlanders notched their second win in four games and moved up to second behind unbeaten Orchard by Group 1.

Makiko Flores and Veronica Velasco-Nelson set the tone for the lopsided win by finishing off their opponents Hyde Gamboa-Esther Soliven in just 11 holes for an 8-and-7 victory.

The two other matches finished by Tagaytay captain Ria Hayne blanked Cherry Ann Lim-Aiden sponsored by Prudential Bank, Justine Sabastian-Cathay Land Inc., Gilbert Nebrida and Silvering Plough Coppertone.

Gloria Primo and Mabel Kneesh sealed the tie clinching second win for Tagaytay with a 6-and-4 rout of Ma. Victoria Lopez and Sally Pinto for the afternoon shots before Linda Isquierdo and Liesl de Villa put the icing on the cake with an equally dominating 5-and-4 victory over Aileen Lacuna and Helen Gan in the high-low format.

Tagaytay had to thank Golf 2-1, when it edged the Forbes Park course before taking a heartbreaking defeat to Orchard last week. It had earlier beaten Orchard for its first win.

It was the only tie played during the week as one of the teams agreed to move their games to a later date due to pressing commitments.

Pangan aces Villamor's No. 4

BAMBU Pamos G. Pangan scored a hole-in-one on the par-3 No. 4 of the Villamor Golf Club in Pasay City on Feb. 25. Pangan is a new tournament. Pangan used an 7-iron to ace the hole 2-second and a Pitmack 4 ball. Pangan rose to the second flight that included Roger Zamora and Jimmy Moreno. Other participants in the mini tournament were Eric Magpantay, Bernard Bulosla, Gener de Guzman, Jojo Gaspar, Jonathan de Leon, Arnel Delgado and Gene Ramos.

New Balance Power Race 4th leg in May

AFTER a successful third staging of the New Balance Power Race Luzi Luza Sisneros, Fleetfoot Sports Inc., distributor of New Balance shoes and sportswear, is looking forward to a bigger and better run on the 4th race.

The fourth installment of this four race, which is shaping up to be one of the country's premiere running events, will hit the road at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig on May 29.

More than 15,000 competitors and volunteers took part in the event last year including the country's marathon record holders Eduardo Buenavista and Dennis del Martin, who ruled the centerpiece 21 K Power race.

The nine-event Improvement & Exercise Enhancer, New Balance is targeting 4,000 runners, most of whom are expected to compete in the shorter 10K and 5K distances.

At stake is P350,000 in cash and gift certificates with the winners of the 21K event taking home P25,000. The second and third placers will pocket P15,000 and P10,000 respectively.

Registration fees are P200 for the New Balance 25K Power Race, and P150 for the 10K and 5K races. All participants will be issued the much-talked about New Balance running singlets.

Mickelson, Woods set Doral duel

WOODS: Tournament shows ... ►

MICKELSON: On a rampage ◄

DORAL — Phil Mickelson continued to bully the Blue Monster with a 6-under 66 and Tiger Woods put on a dynamic display with a 9-under 63 Saturday to leave him only one shot behind after the third round of the Ford Championship.

The performances by two of golf's most popular players will pit the pair against one another in the final group on Sunday, their first head-to-head showdown in two years.

"We both know we're going to have to make a bunch of birdies," Woods said.

Woods overwhelmed the back nine with his power, to shot more memorable than when he drove the green on the 347-yard 14th, ending 40 feet from the pin for a two-putt birdie.

Mickelson went at 20-under 196, the 10th consecutive round in which he's played by far the best in the tournament.

Zach Johnson, who had to pull out of the prom-ise with a bad back, shot a 68 and was six shots behind at 14-under 202, along with Aaron Schmidt (67) and defending champion Craig Stadler (67).

Vijay Singh couldn't keep pace with a 68 and was seven shots behind, joined by two-time Masters champion Ian Woosnam (74) and former U.S. Open champion Jim Furyk (67).

But the attention was on Woods and Mickelson, who had played in the final group at the 2003 Buick Invitational. Woods went on to win by four, with Mickelson six shots behind.

On Saturday Woods had six birdies, finishing his round with an 8-footer on the 18th and in a television interview realized happy birthday to his father, Earl, who turned 77 on Saturday.

With blue skies, warm sunshine and a leader board packed with the best players to golf, the galleries packed the Grand Golf House and Spa Blue Course, standing six deep at the putting green.

They were rewarded with play-outs as Mickelson's partner Furyk played nearby out of the rough that happened to lead to a fast for birdie on No. 7, the start of three-in-a-row Mickelson bellowers that sent him alone for much of the round.

"He's on a rampage," Johnson said. "It's fun to watch if you're a spectator kind of stinks if you're part of it."

Woods became a big part of it with tremendous shots along the back nine.

He hammered his 3-wood about 270 yards just over the flag, setting up an easy up-and-down birdie. His birdie from just off the green at No. 9hh another big 3-wood, this one from 263 yards into a stiff breeze. Woods became the first player all week to reach the 600-yard 12th hole in two for another birdie.

Then came the 16th, where the two were matched up for the second straight day. Mickelson drove the green, Woods didn't realize he needed the green until he was halfway up the fairway.

"He was chipped," Woods said. "He didn't have any clue. I just knew I hit it in the direction of the green."

The team rushed the Blue Monster, but Mickelson drew blink.

He usually holed a chip from an awkward lie on the par-5 16th for a tap-in birdie, and pitched up another birdie on the par-5 12th with a pitch into 6 feet.

AP

Wizards nip Bobcats

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — Larry Brown ripped in Jason Terry's stolen watch, 5.1 seconds to play to give the Washington Wizards an 88-84 victory over the Charlotte Bobcats on Saturday night.

The Wizards turned issues between Washington's final possession. Jason Jaquette's shot was off, and Gerald Wallace's shot was blocked by Brendan Haywood. The Wizards called timeout and Terry drove down the clock before missing the ball to Dixon in the left corner. He shot bounced off the rim, but Pruitt was under the basket and tipped it in.

Haywood scored 22 points for Washington, which broke its six-game road losing streak.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Steve Francis scored 26 points and rookie backcourt mate Jameer Nelson added a career-high 22 as the Orlando Magic raced to an early lead and blew out the Nets, 105-83.

Kelvin Cato added 16 points for the Magic, who had four players in double figures. Nelson, further entrenched as the Orlando starting point guard, hung Devin Harris and Jason Kidd on the bench for 7 of 9 and had three assists.

In Atlanta, Shaquille Jackson hit a pair of free-throws with 1.2 seconds remaining, and Allen Iverson scored 30 points as the Philadelphia 76ers defeated the Atlanta Hawks in a hard-fought, 91-89 victory.

Iverson, who hit all 14 of his free-throws and scored 23 points in the first half, finished with 30 points on 10-of-20 shooting from the floor in the second half.

The 76ers won two straight for the first time since acquiring Chris Webber in a Feb. 22 deal with Sacramento. Webber finished with 19 points and is more high-light to bounce.

In Milwaukee, Desmond Mason scored 28 points. Maurice Williamson and Michael Redd added 16 points each and the Bucks defeated the Chicago Bulls to 101-window for the 14th consecutive time, 95-87.

The Bulls' losing streak to the Bucks dates to March 29, 1998, the year Michael Jordan led the team to the last of its six NBA championships.

In Phoenix, Shawn Marion had 26 points and nine rebounds, and Steve Nash added 20 points as the Phoenix Suns defeated the Portland Trail Blazers by the third-time this season, 129-118.

Coach Mike D'Antoni moved starters Marion, Amare Stoudemire and Steve Nash to the bench in fourth quarter after the Suns were ahead, 100-76, after three.

Stoudemire contributed 23 points, but blank saw his string of 11 career games stopped in 11.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 11 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter as Devean George-Boggans continued their push for the playoffs under new coach Jerome Kid with their sixth straight victory, a 108-89 rout of the Clippers.

Bryant, who is paced who opposed two seasons with the Clippers, has scored in double figures in 28 of his last 29 games and has five 20-point efforts during that stretch.

Lamar Odom, who has had 21 points for the Boggans, who reported three longest winning streak since a seven-game streak from Nov. 18 Dec. 2, 1989. Then registered in 30-20 and went over 500 for the first time since Dec. 22, 1.21.

The Boggans have made up 5 1/2 games on the Lakers for the eighth and final Western Conference playoff berth, and how and there still 23 games remaining. AP

CARMELO: Anthony of the Denver Nuggets soars for a dunk over forward Elton Brand of the Los Angeles Clippers. ►►

Tierro loses as RP Cuppers bow out

...and Yii Korea, building on a big doubles win the day before, clinched the five reserve singles victory the first round of the ninth Oceania Zone Group II Davis Cup tie against host Philippines at the Philippine Columbian Association (PCA) clubhouse indoor courts.

Jun Woon-sun, unveiling a vast array of weapons, stubbed Philippine No. 1 Derrick John Tierro in straight sets, 6-3, 6-3, 6-3, in one hour and 55 minutes to give Korea an unbeatable 3-1 lead.

The Korean credited for a final 2-1 win as Johnny Arcilla beat Suh Heon-yoon, 6-3, 7-5, in the re-lose leg fifth match.

The victory pushed the Koreans to the next round against the winner of Pacific Oceania and Lebanon. Pacific Oceania led, 2-0, as of Friday.

"Patrick had a big lesser," said Sooyong Shaw, Tierro's personal trainer and a former Davis Cupper and now playing captain.

"He is still in the developmental stage. At least he gained experience in such a big international event like this."

"My players give fourth 10-or-30 weeks of international training exposure," added Shaw.

Tierro broke the ice for the Philippine team, demolishing Suh, 6-0, three sets, 7-5, 7-5 and 6-2, Friday.

But Arcilla fell to Jun, who awaited the new to roll through, 4-6, 6-3, 6-7 (7), 6-4 (6)-4-0.

The tandem of Arcilla and Rodney Eliot, who had never played together before, bowed to the team of Chung Hee-seok and Kim Dong-hyun, 6-4, 6-0, 6-0.

Arcilla was a late minute replacement for Joseph Sirosena, a doubles specialist who had won-a-year.

In other Group II ties, Pakistan beat Thailand, 3-2; Taiwan topped Japan, 3-2, while India blanked China, 5-0.

Pakistan pulled through in Islamabad. They upset world-ranked Paradorn Srichaphan, 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4, for an unassailable 3-1 advantage after the first reverse singles.

Annika just 3 behind

HUIXQUILUCAN, Mexico — Annika Sorenstam shot a 1-under 71 Saturday to move within three strokes of leader Cristie Kerr after two rounds of the Mizuno Classic.

Sorenstam went 3 under through 14, but double-bogeyed 15 to eventually drop to fourth at 141.

Kerr, who finished second last week at the HSBC Open in Hawaii, took the lead after making an birdie Sorenstam—four of them on the back nine. She also had a pair of bogeys to move to a under 136.

Kerr said she had a secret system for adjusting her shots to the high altitude at the Bosque Real in Huixquilucan. AP

Castillo jumper lifts Purefoods

Pressgroup B3

Quarters: 19-34, 35-48, 49-57, 58-80

Jumbo Hotdogs (84)

The W

Bush gave CIA authority to ship terror suspects abroad for interrogation–NYT

WASHINGTON—The Central Intelligence Agency has been implementing a secret program of transferring suspected terrorists to foreign countries for interrogation abroad under broad authority that has allowed it to act without case-by-case approval from the White House, State or Justice Departments, The New York Times reported on its website late Saturday.

Citing unnamed current and former government officials, the newspaper said the unusually expansive authority for the CIA to operate independently was provided by the White House under a still-classified directive signed by President George W. Bush within days of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The process, known as rendition, has been central in the government's efforts to disrupt terrorism, the report said.

The rendition program has been under scrutiny in recent weeks after several former detainees have complained of inhumane treatment and human rights groups have complained the operations violated American standards condemning torture.

But a senior US official said that a 'bad Osco mind -only at those suspected of knowing about terrorist operations, and emphasized that the CIA had gone to great lengths to ensure that they were detained under humane conditions and not tortured, according to The Times.

The paper quotes the official as saying the "CIA has existing authorities to lawfully conduct these operations."

The official agreed to discuss the program on what the sometimes that the United States used the program to secretly send people to other countries for the purpose of torture, according to the report.

The transfers were portrayed as an alternative to what those same officials have said is the costly, manpower-intensive process of bringing them to the United States or to American run facilities in other countries.

Human rights groups have accused the Department of subjecting several former detainees to coercive interrogation techniques and brutal treatment during months spent in detention under the program in Egypt and other countries.

The official would not discuss specific cases, but did not dispute that there had been instances in which prisoners were mistreated, The Times said. The official said those had died.

The official refused to say how many prisoners had been transferred as part of the program, the paper pointed out.

But former government officials say that since the Sept. 11 attacks, the CIA has flown between 100 and 150 suspected terrorists from one foreign country to another, including to Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan, according to the report.

A half a dozen current and former officials told the New York Times the Bush administration may have turned a blind eye to torture.

"I really wonder what they are doing, and I am no longer sure what I believe" one former senior government official was quoted as saying. Reuters

Distributed by NewspaperDirect

K

s a kiss during the closing ceremony of the 9th Russia's Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, March 5. Miss d will represent her home city in national and ests. REUTERS

Fear drives long flight to Kenya from Darfur

. Bryson Hull

UMA, Kenya—Fear elled Mohammed ed Osman's two-year, 0-km flight from Su- s Darfur region to va, but anger, he says, bring him home.

he farmer never imag- Kenya, to where thou- s of fellow Sudanese the south fled in a 21- civil war, would be his taste of safety after auders slaughtered t of his village in a sep- e conflict in western an in November 2002.

ut by foot, plane, train, x and donkey, Ahmed 21 friends and family -crossed Sudan and ar- l in Kakuma camp in hwestern Kenya, the y desert home to 00 refugees from eight can countries.

early 60 percent are Su- ese, but Ahmed's group es up just over half of 42 refugees in Kakuma the Darfur crisis that pitted non-Arab rebels nst Arab militias.

early all the Sudanese in uma fled the civil war in by southern Sudan.

f I go back to Darfur, I kill the Arabs. If I had er, I would go. We have power here," he said, ding in front of his home st a few weeks in Kaku- Three, the last built of e mud-hut complexes top red-tinged sands.

We did not want to come enya. We did not know about it," Ahmed said.

Terror sparked his flight in November 2002, when marauding militiamen known as Janjaweed torched his north Darfur village, Masmaji, killing his two brothers, his parents, three nieces and dozens of neighbors.

"They came at night and burned the houses and they went back and shot anyone who ran away from the fire. They took children around the back and shot them," he said.

Ahmed, his wife and three children were out in their sorghum fields when the raiders came, and they only returned to their razed, lifeless village two days later.

They fled for nearby Habila but, warned of impending Janjaweed attacks, they moved again.

"I decided to go to Chad, because it was near, but the Janjaweed cut the way," he said.

Their next stops were the larger Darfur towns of El Fasher and Nyala, but a few months in each with no fields to tend left the farmer in Ahmed frustrated, and his family hungry.

He bought train tickets for Khartoum, looking to go to its squalid squatter camps. Police at the train station had different ideas. Ordered to give his reasons for traveling, Ahmed replied that there was war at home.

"The security said 'That is not the truth. You must go back to Darfur.'" *Reuters*

ISSN 0116-2442 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. XXVI, No. 69

OPINION

Text or post feedback to opinion@inquirer.net.ph; mobile: 0917.5300007 or 0920.9541007

Publisher ISAGANI YAMBOT
Editor in Chief LETTY JANE GONZALEZ-MANGAHAS
Managing Editor JOSE NO. D. MANALO
Associate Editor ANA MARIE S. D. ALMARIO
Associate Editor for Readership ROSARIO G. CANTELMO
News Editors ANTHONY T. ESPINOSA JR. • CHAY HOSAKA • NINA D. NICOLAS
Opinion Editor LORETA C. ONGPIN
Business Editor FRANCISCO R. BONNEVIE JR.
City Editor DINO LAO
Senior News Editors JAMES B. SANDOVAL JR.
Editorial Consultant ARMANDO DOROMAL
Chief Photographer RAFFY G. GARCIA III
Art & Design Director LORETA A. VILLAMIN

Board Chairman HOWARD C. PHOA
President ALEXANDRA PHOA ROMUALDEZ
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing ROSARIO R. BONNEVIE
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services EDGAR R. VALDEZ
Office Address Inquirer Plaza FELIX B. GLORIA
Mail Subscriptions ELVIRA P. LAMBINICIO

All rights reserved. Except as provided by law, no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any manner, electronic or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Corruption watch

EDITORIALS

IT IS a sign of how the promise of folks remain unrealized that in the last celebrations of the 1986 revolution, there were calls for checking corruption and fostering accountability and transparency. The positive thing here is the recognition that the many-headed monster remains unvanquished. That a critical mass exists to fulfill the revolution's ideals, despite the disappointments and heartaches, throws the power of the historical memory that folks has engendered.

What is also positive is that even in the run-up to the 13th anniversary of the revolution, there had been efforts to systematize anti-corruption efforts. For example, the National Movement for Free Elections is working with the Department of Health to monitor the delivery and inventory of medicines to 75 DOH hospitals and 15 health centers. The program aims to prevent "ghost" delivery and under-delivery and overpricing of medicines.

The program repeats the formula that was applied in the Department of Education, in which the G-Watch of the Ateneo School of Government, Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN), Stairbird, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts monitor and report the delivery of textbooks to public schools nationwide.

In the defense department, the Bishop-Businessmen's Conference, Procurement Watch and Makati Business Club (MBC) have banded together on the recruitment and training of volunteers who will act as observers in bidding and awards committees, to discourage corruption.

Meanwhile, the Center for Contextualized Theology and Applied Ethics of the University of Santo Tomas is training educators to monitor government procurements. UST has been asked by the Civil Society Observers, a group of NGOs and professional and academic organizations formed with some prodding from the Government Procurement Policy Board-Technical Support Office, to facilitate the formation of a procurement watch system. UST will train and form a pool of anti-corruption watchers through "values-engineering," "empowering" them so that they would stay committed and adopt the appropriate templates posed by falsehoods and other inordinate efforts.

All of these initiatives show that different sectors are coming together creatively in order to check corruption. If it is true that in 2001 the nation lost P95 billion through graft, then corruption is the most important cause of our poverty, and it is only right that all sectors deal with the monster single-mindedly and forcefully.

Challenge to business

BUT the "anti-corruptionists" can do something forcefully right at this moment without going through the tedious and risk-fraught conduct of monitoring—with lynx eyes—government procurement and bidding. Since many of the anti-graft initiatives are business-propelled, perhaps the businessmen could reach as a thing or two on stopping corruption. Perhaps, they themselves could stop corruption right at their doorstep.

A Social Weather Stations survey of 700 managers across the country shows most companies set aside 22 percent of the cost of a government contract for paying bribes. Only 21 percent of the companies surveyed keep one set of accounts. The rest, of course, keep two: one set of accounts for regulators, and the other for underground—or underworld—purposes.

Considering business' propensity to bribe its way through, then business' participation in anti-corruption drives is problematic. For example, the MBC is helping the Bureau of Internal Revenue in tax revenues by improving collections and the agency's internal system. Ditto with the Bureau of Customs, where the MBC and the TRM are helping stop smuggling and improving collection. Business' participation in both agencies is worrisome because businessmen don't pay the right taxes and tariffs, if they bother to pay at all.

Thus, the first determined move in any anti-corruption campaign is for business to make the resolve not to choose the easy way out. Perhaps, if the MBC and chambers of commerce would do as single-mindedly then there would be no more need for watchdog systems. This might be wishful thinking, but it would be valid according to the Taoist philosophy of non-interference and letting things flow, of course, without artificial distortions. It would work also because of the Catholic principle of subsidiarity in which everyone is expected to do his part according to his competence. Thus, if businessmen really want to get rid of corruption, they should do their part competently: pay the correct taxes and dues, refusing bribery and extortion.

Don't just cut pork barrel; totally abolish it

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I HEARTILY endorse the suggestion of Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago that all congressional and senatorial pork barrel funds be used "as a service to the people." But, why not? After all, that's what they always say when campaigning for elective positions: they only want to serve. What better service can they give than to use practically all their pork barrel funds to construct overpasses? Santiago should immediately set the example. I propose, however, that these senators-to-be campaign under Duelle-Lacson, Alfredo Lim and Franklin Drilon, who just saved the taxpayers P300 million by rejecting their pork barrel. She need not even officially file them.

The exchange of accusations between the congressmen and senators over the recent passage of the 2010 national budget has exposed the wintery soul (heart) that legislators expect to steal from us (not from the people, haven't they been, all blissfully unaware of the lawyers that their representatives are, have asked me what the question is all about, to use their words, it's about "pork barrel."

The public, however, is still confused, due to what happened: miraculously find substantial appropriated budgets with the pork barrel reduced from P300 million to P120 million for each senator, and from P76 million to P40 million for each congressman. The House of Representatives passed the budget and sent it to the Senate. The Senate passed it. It is now a few days ago. This informed the congressmen.

Why are they angry when the Senate passed the budget that they themselves approved? Because they had planned to reserve the pork barrel to its original amount during the bicameral conference committee. Then, they'll put the blame on the senators by claiming that the bill they passed had a reduced pork barrel budget. The diversion plan was to bypass the Senate committee meeting so that no new budget would be passed before the March 16 deadline. Under the law, when no new budget is passed after that date, the previous year's budget is automatically adopted—as what happened last year when the 2009 budget was adopted for the year 2004. That budget contains a higher allowance for pork barrel.

The senators got wise to this trick and hastily passed the budget earlier approved by the House, hitting the clever plot of the congressmen. The latter thought they were being smart for the senators outsmarted them. That's what made the congressmen furious.

In retaliation, they accused the senators of secretly inserting their own pork by realigning the intelligence funds of different agencies.

Palpe, said Senate President Drilon (not Enrique) What they did, he explained, was to identify which and where specific items of the budget these funds would be going—e.g., for scholarship program—as what auditing would be more accurate, if all were lumped together, any expense could be labeled "for intelligence" and also would be the end of it, he said. That makes graft, corruption and abuse easier to commit. In short, no part of the intelligence funds will go to their pork, Drilon said.

What the Senate should have done was to include the pork barrel, not just reduce it.

"I have no objection to that," Drilon said, reminding the gentlemen that he and other senators (Lacson and Lim) have already waived their pork and have told the budget department not to release theirs. While denial the three of them requested that the P300 million for the governor's office in Cebu be restored

Remembering the Holocaust

THE DESCENT of congressional gridlock onto the eye measures and the way of words between the House and the Senate will be remembered, on the budget, how convinced many citizens were, over, about the need to change our form of government. Many are now convinced that our country would be better served by a parliamentary style system or a system other than by a presidential and bicameral one.

But there are also citizens who totally agree with the proposal to abolish the entire Congress, although not the Senate, as some of the Mindanao former hostages suggested, but by some kind of people's fiat. The reasons are definitely getting quite disgusted with the antics of both chambers.

This is alarming, for it implies that many citizens are in favor of dictatorship, which is what we still have without a legislature. In this regard, a dictatorship of the right stripes is for the most probable——"benevolent" one! Implying that a corrupt and inefficient legislature, at least, we can change the members of Congress through our vote; but the rulers in a military dictatorship can stay for a lifetime. This frightful thought shouldn't take root in our minds, for it is against democratic principles and ideals. Democracy is timeless and inspire them to abandon their ruthless tendency and self-interests. They should start thinking of the country for a change.

* * *

The Stanley Times banner read: "GMA: Cha Cha is next." The story said that since the fiscal conditions brighten up for the country with the passage of the revenue measures, the President has given the Senate-House dominated the drive to push for economic and federal government. The problem is that President Macapagal-Arroyo has been dragging that idea like a yo-yo——so frantic her agenda. Other will run because it seems almost impossible that GMA (for this she need to reform the quarrel between the two chambers). I don't know what else will convince her. She need her unwavering commitment to this idea, as it can finally take off. The current system has been a total failure in this country.

* * *

In our ABK program last night, we discussed what is going on between the two chambers, and we noted suggestions but to look into the reasons that led to the problem and possible solutions. We invited former Senator and Isabela Rep. Federico Montes, who, apart from his 15 years in Congress, had held three Cabinet positions in two administrations. Advanced in age, he lovingly for the parliamentary form. He feels it's more responsive than the presidential form, since the members of the Cabinet, led by the prime minister, are also members of the legislature (also) have the needs of their constituents; thus they can craft the proper laws. Moreover, he said, a parliamentary form is more accountable to the people since the Cabinet members' tenure depends on the confidence vote of the majority in the legislature. There is also the "Question Hour" every day, if necessary, about how executives are spoiled, etc.

He asserted that the PM, who runs the day-to-day affairs of government, is not unlike the president/CEO of a corporation, who could be removed by the stockholders if they feel he's not doing his job well. He also noted that the "executive session" that characterized the relationship between the Senate and Congress in past one was, this session would have gone much further. One lapsed, data in this is proof that our current system is not working. Incidentally, I note in Carmen Pedosa's column that Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, who presided the interpellations most with speaker Jose de Venecia, is agreeable to a parliamentary style so long as the chief executive body is called the Senate. Why not? JDV wants to call it, the "House of the Senate"!

* * *

Recently we commemorated the 60th anniversary of significant events here, such as the liberation of Manila and of Los Baños, and the rescue of American POWs in the Cabanatuan prison camp. Also, we commemorated the 40th commemoration of those events, the fateful Embassy will stage a special theater presentation at the grand ballroom of the intercontinental hotel to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in Europe. Last Jan. 24, the United Nations convened a special session to mark this event, as requested by 170 member countries, among them, ours.

The play features the story of Holocaust survivor Telma Greenwald (played by Jennifer Hurtado), unfolding in a role where she sings and dances with Nazi officers on a grand piano, helping her to "untangle the puzzle of emotions caused by the recollection of those dark years." The audience in the theater becomes Hitler's guests and Telma's fellow prisoners as she then faces to face and face-to-face with Hitler (played by Mona Sinet) talks about the sufferings in the concentration camp and the war.

* * *

"Anthology" is a legend in Israeli avant-garde theater, and has been performed all over Europe, the United States and Asia. After its Manila debut, it will be shown in Cebu City on March 9 under the auspices of the Cebu Arts Council.

Remembering the past

THERE is the best Tuesday, on the saying goes. But, sometimes, there are hours that linger in spite of the passage of the years.

Last Feb. 26, the newspaper's Junior Inquirer section featured made-in-Japan products, such as cartoons, soaps, origami. The Japanese art or process of folding squares of paper into representational shapes) and toys, that have gained popularity in our country. Apply, the section's first page carried the head "Japanese Invasion."

READER'S ADVOCATE

Raul L. Lambrinca

By uncanny coincidence, a week before, the inquirer carried with a few days before its commemoration the 60th anniversary of the sacking of Manila by Japanese military forces. The articles recounted the horrible experiences that several families suffered in the hands of Japanese soldiers in American troops advanced toward Manila.

A reader, Anthony de Inda of Sta. Ana, Manila felt very uncomfortable about the timing of that Junior Inquirer issue. Describing it as "a perfect example of journalism without proper research," he wrote: "Every February, the City of Manila commemorates the slaughter of more than 100,000 innocent civilians by remnants of the Japanese occupation forces" defending Manila. The bloodiest conflagration since Feb. 3 to March 3 and that's a big part of the city in ruins.

"I am a big fan of Japanese anime since I was a child. I grew up watching Japanese cartoons and playing with Japanese robotic during the '70s. But new features of Japanese pop culture could have been done in any other month but February," Mr. de Inda added.

"We need to remember and respect the innocent victims of the Liberation of Manila and teach the next generation to always remember this sad part of our history."

Reading habit

I cannot fault the reader for finding her week's issue of the Junior Inquirer insensitive. Considering not as it did at a time when the newspaper had just given full play to what many consider "the most vicious crime in Philippine history."

From the reader's perspective, it showed "disrespect" for the men and women who, 60 years ago, were at the receiving end of the horrors and guns of the forefathers of the students of those Japanese forces.

Some things though have to be cleared up with regard to the section in question. As its name denotes, the section is geared toward the younger set of our society, in particular, those in the elementary and high school levels.

It aims to encourage them to read, and what better way to get them into that habit other than by providing them of reading materials that relate to the things that interest them most at their age——such as cartoons, entertainment devices and fashion accessories.

Earlier studies have shown that children are usually attracted to comic strips in newspapers and magazines because of their use of many of the words they understand the least. From there, they launch out to the different parts of the newspaper until the habit of reading becomes a part of their daily lives.

The same principle guides the Junior Inquirer section. With its colorful photos, articles written by young writers, and other features, it aims to "entice" the 9- to 11- age bracket, the newspaper hopes to strengthen the reading habit among them.

Friendship Day

It is common knowledge that, with the proliferation of TV shows, video games, movies and, lately, text and games to cell phones, many of our primary and secondary level students have lost interest in reading books, newspapers and other publications.

The "Japanese invasion" issue that the reader complained about was prepared three weeks ahead, independent of the main section of the newspaper where the five part series on the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers came out.

It was a simple case of coincidence. There was no connection on the part of the section's staff in "belittle" the suffering of the victims of the 1945 Manila holocaust.

The Japanese theme was chosen to mark the 10th anniversary of the Philippine-Japan Festival, an activity that celebrates the relationship between the two countries. For this year, the Festival's activities which were shown on local giant screens to commemorate Emperor Hirohito's arrival in Yokohama, Japan in 1988. There he started his two months before going to Europe to push for reforms in the Spanish colonial administration.

On final word. While I believe that the past and its lessons should not be forgotten, it is equally important that we do not allow the past to burden us down as we meet the challenges of the present and the future.

Silent critic

Going to another subject matter, with the passing away last week of former Gandhigarhan Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena, I wonder what has become of the way to call my attention whenever he felt a news report about the antigraft court was inaccurate or misleading.

The role the court plays in the government's anti-graft campaign makes it a rich source of news and commentaries. The acquittal or conviction of a public official accused of a crime committed in the course of his office, especially if he or she is considered a "big fish" in the bureaucracy often lands on the front pages of newspapers.

Garchitorena sang me to censure or clarify the news published in the inaccurate about some of the court's decisions. He was particularly touchy about reports that erroneously paraphrased or interpreted the decisions, or speculated on the reasons for the forbearance or inaction of the penalties imposed on those found guilty of the crimes they were accused of. He was zealous in his desire to protect the court's integrity and reputation before the public.

The thing I liked most when he complained about what he considered as inaccurate reports was, he did it in calm and composed manner. Like the methodical lawyer and jurist that he was known to be in the legal circles, he examined the items in the news he took issue with and suggested how it should have been written to be fair to the affected parties.

He had a healthy respect for journalists. He understood the time constraints and other pressures they have to contend with in the preparation of their stories and respectful sites. Not once did I hear him say or suggest something bad about the people who wrote or edited the reports that he felt were inaccurate.

* * *

No readers' concerns may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Blumentritt Streets, Makati City. Or through fax no. 897-4593 to 94, or reader mail raul@inquirer.com.ph.

No longer unsung heroes

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

THE IDEA of archives may seem to have become obscure in the electronic world we live in today. Not to mention that its integrity has become anonymity, obsolete to digital. Although a central figure in the alleged forgery of documents pertaining to the citizenship of the late Fernando Poe Jr. This was, perhaps, the only time that our archives drew the media spotlight, albeit for shadowy reasons.

The term "archives" (or archive) has also entered the world of the "erasable" in Philippine government bureaucracy, where names of offices are constantly changed as if such alterations would logically wipe clean the tainted images of public institutions. Although the official title of the "National Archives" the office is now actually called "Records Management and Archives Office" and has been given the acronym RMAO.

Archivists are usually perceived as antiquarians who are content to live in dusty, dark basements, filling papers that have become brittle with age. Antiquarians they are not. And it is not anymore always in dark boutique where archival work is done but in modernized, usually intimate laboratories in front of the desk. Archival work is done in social matters.

Thanks to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, archivists are now recognized as cultural workers and have been given a membership slot in the NCCA council. An *Archival work is actually a very essential component of heritage conservation. It is a special field of cultural work undertaken by experts in the varied genres of scientific conservation.*

Last week, I was exposed to the work being done by a professional organization of archivists

in the country, the Society of Ecclesiastical Archivists of the Philippines (SEAP). From the name, one surmises that this is a group of Church archivists, but no, they are not. They are the keepers of sacred records in parishes. That is certainly part of their task, but its membership also extends to church and non-sectarian schools. And it consists among its individual members archival experts from the Ateneo de Davao University, the Silliman and the University of the Philippines-Diliman, whose archivists are among the most sought-after resource persons in the field and are often invited for speaking engagements here and abroad. The members are also active in cultural organizations in the Philippines.

My brush with the group was an eye-opener. For here are these specialists in paper conservation, photo conservation, film conservation, electronic conservation, museum conservation, and the cause of their expertise and their integrity as professionals, some of them have been entrusted by famous individuals and foundations of historical figures as repositories of important papers. They are also often consulted by private collectors and the like. *I was surprised to learn——saved an archival system for their term of paper records.*

At the helm of the SEAP is the young and witty Dominican priest now stationed at the Monteng Rosario in Pangasinan, Fr. Daniel Patanao. He is the current archivist, the death of a Dominican confrere, which suddenly created a scramble for the dead man's personal papers and records: only to highlight the need for archival work in his own congregation. Fr. Patanao is also the second cousin lawyer Joan Mendiano. Msgr. Rey Mendiano of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, who has actually been serving the diocese as chancellor. Chancellor is a nice sounding name, but few people know what it is actually the chief archivist of a diocese, as such, it is the chancellor's office to sift and categorize records that will spell the difference in the future in situations where supporting documents will be needed to resolve disputes over Church properties or for a person's confirmation, among others.

But the work of archivists is not meant just to benefit scholarly research. Neither is it a matter of even historical greats. Archives benefit all of us in our everyday lives. They are the repositories of such mundane records as birth and death certificates, or marriage contracts. Come to think of it, all of us are archivists in one way or the other. We all have our little archive of books, our own files and papers. Some of us are even guilty of actually being proud somewhere in a jumble, thus almost always requiring a frantic search when there is need for any of them. It is the archivists who can tell us how to structure our files using our home computers.

A few years back, the government embarked on an ambitious modernization work for the National Archives with funds from the government of Spain. The work, still in progress, includes the construction of a new building, the modernization of its conservation and safekeeping technologies, and the office will no longer be the historical turmoil that it was, moving from one venue to another. Once an ice plant in a kitchen plant, Nacionalista Party headquarters during the Japanese invasion of Manila, such that at one time, some documents were used as buildings by American soldiers. The archivist's hopes to eventually have a building of its own, at the old Ayuntamiento in Intramuros.

Archival work is for the latest generations and is elusive as to know that archivists are closely getting known and are no longer the unsung heroes that they were.

* * *

Comments to montalvan@edu.edu.ph

Natural selection

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

normative usually hovers a high turnover of officials and leaves the new one like old.

For a time, it seemed that instead of looking like a pool of exhausted games, the country's perennial dynastic wars producing top-tier leaders. Some even stated the obsolescence of both the press and those new wonderkinds of politics in using the term, "spin doctor." And the new generation seemed to speak before, think before, and most of all.....because it is the new quasi-neutral politics.....even musician have become politicians, with a Bayani Fernando, the wonderkinds' archaic about has been shortened to his reflection of inane brilliance.

Still, the House seemed more capable of organizing itself, in managing and running the committee's before the mid-week to close, and in settling the legislative agenda and determination of work. The Senate, on the hand, with the collapse of the old system (a collapse due to the near-total fading away of the pre-martial law party system and the changing faces of the electorate), put a premium on the individual senator's ambitions, and with the influx of movie and media faces into its halls, kept "passing out" whenever need had to be done. And unlike the House.....always was certain of mediocrity that allows individual senators to break away from the pack and make a name for themselves and accomplishment——the Senate (with 22 to 24 ballboys all trying to crush members, ready at any given time) was suffering from a persistent (to a sudden drop to to subscribe 82. This leaves the jobs for lame duck senators that I refer to walk and chew gum at the same time!). It even seemed, due to crime, that the House had managed to sway public opinion to its side in the latest chapter of its generation-old resolution to abolish the "Upper House."

The problem is, the House also finds every possible person to abuse itself in the face. Its latest act of self-mutilation was the lead cry for "reconciliation," from its members who felt cheated by the sudden and unusual burst of energy coming from the Senate.

The manner by which the Senate turned the tables on the House demonstrates, yet again, the difference between a chamber with a national constituency and one whose members typically lead. The difference lies in the—and even please—the Senate's ability to act quickly, to put forward a strategy, and the senators will have the last say every time, because media will always go by one with a more national and even international allure. The compromise may have the wholehearted support of a constituency-conscious House, but, from the standpoint of someone who displeases its leader, but what is that compared to experience who has mobilized the vast and yet unquantifiable mass known as "the people"? What is a compromise with those, say, this is a loosely connected to his opponent which means nothing to voters, given that, to them the illusory satisfaction of "knowing"? Which may be why as few of the "Spice Boys" have successfully gone through the many evolutions from local to national politics boy.

The manner by which the Senate turned the tables on the House demonstrates, yet again, the difference between a chamber with a national constituency and one whose members typically lead. The difference lies in the—and even please—the Senate's ability to act quickly, to put forward a strategy, and the senators will have the last say every time, because media will always go by one with a more national and even international allure. The compromise may have the wholehearted support of a constituency-conscious House, but, from the standpoint of someone who displeases its leader, but what is that compared to experience who has mobilized the vast and yet unquantifiable mass known as "the people"? What is a compromise with those, say, this is a loosely connected to his opponent which means nothing to voters, given that, to them the illusory satisfaction of "knowing"? Which may be why as few of the "Spice Boys" have successfully gone through the many evolutions from local to national politics boy.

Comments/letters may be sent to editor or clarify the news published in the inaccurate about some of the court's decisions. He was particularly touchy about reports that erroneously paraphrased or interpreted the decisions, or speculated on the reasons for the forbearance or inaction of the penalties imposed on those found guilty of the crimes they were accused of. He was zealous in his desire to protect the court's integrity and reputation before the public.

The thing I liked most when he complained about what he considered as inaccurate reports was, he did it in calm and composed manner. Like the methodical lawyer and jurist that he was known to be in the legal circles, he examined the items in the news he took issue with and suggested how it should have been written to be fair to the affected parties.

He had a healthy respect for journalists. He understood the time constraints and other pressures they have to contend with in the preparation of their stories and respectful sites. Not once did I hear him say or suggest something bad about the people who wrote or edited the reports that he felt were inaccurate.

* * *

No readers' concerns may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Blumentritt Streets, Makati City. Or through fax no. 897-4593 to 94, or reader mail raul@inquirer.com.ph.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
(The National Association of Philippine Newspapers)

New taxes meant to save gov't

TODAY, as we say the Filipino people can take on additional taxes without doing circles in more ways than one, it is time to stop the people we pay more to save the treasury, the nerve of deceiving them to save an inside government that should have been kicked out yesterday.

The Philippine economy is on the brink of bankruptcy and President Macapagal-Arroyo and her economic hegemony cannot do anything about it. The fiscal crisis will continue for as long as the Philippine economy runs the course imposed by the globalization imperialism. Didn't Ms Arroyo herself admit in the past that we must liberalization force the economy?

A two percentage point increase in value-added tax will actually translate into a 20-percent increase in the prices of basic commodities and services, not to mention professional services that anyone also targeted in an expanded VAT coverage. Try as it might, Malacañang cannot hide the gimmicking that it is the mid-rate earners, the poor Filipino families, that will bear the brunt of the proposed tax measures. Thus, initially at six to seven billions pesos, using as a minimum wage of P386, would again be forced to pay up one fifth of a (P60) to the government.

Other alternative revenue-generating schemes are obviously available, but these are ignored by the Arroyo government.

Not only the government so seriously refuses to redefine pursuit of bilateral free trade agreements. If the president calling for the tariff elimination of select commodities under the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) would be approved, it is projected that the government would lose P16.9 billion in foregone revenues starting this year (P13.39 billion in personal income taxes and P3.54 billion in VAT payments). We also do not want a raise in the tariffs on imported products, some tariffs that were lifted due to World Trade Organization rules have resulted in foregone revenues of up to P53 billion/year in lost revenues.

The IMF leakage from 2000-2002, if collected, would be more than enough to cover last year's budget deficit.

Indeed, the Philippine tax system remains oppressive and unpoor, pampering foreign capitalists and the richest with five-year tax incentives (semiprocess) while taxing hardest those who cannot afford to pay. Here, we anticipate that the deceitful betray deliberations on the proposed VAT hike will have just one concern in mind—how to pass the bill with the least opposition from the people.

We say no to the VAT increase!
We say no to additional taxes!
We say no to more sacrifices that are demanded from the people just to save the inside tit-for-tat corruption!

—BILLY MORATA,
secretary general,
Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD),
70C Edith St., Santan, Quezon City

Also wondering about MNTC's franchise

I AGREE with the letter "What's the rate hike for?" (PDI, 2/22/05).

Where I live in Quezon City, water distribution service is worse than when it was still delivered by Manilans. I just don't know why the present government can't see that, or why the previous government awarded the contract. There is always unloading of water, and repair service is too slow. In office parlance, we are over-zealous (sincere) in our duties, but the end-user consumers, the poor Filipino families, that will bear the brunt of the proposed tax measures. Thus, initially at six to seven billions pesos, using as a minimum wage of P386, would again be forced to pay up one fifth of a (P60) to the government.

Other alternative revenue-generating schemes are obviously available, but these are ignored by the Arroyo government.

Not only the government so seriously refuses to redefine pursuit of bilateral free trade agreements. If the president calling for the tariff elimination of select commodities under the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) would be approved, it is projected that the government would lose P16.9 billion in foregone revenues starting this year (P13.39 billion in personal income taxes and P3.54 billion in VAT payments). We also do not want a raise in the tariffs on imported products, some tariffs that were lifted due to World Trade Organization rules have resulted in foregone revenues of up to P53 billion/year in lost revenues.

The IMF leakage from 2000-2002, if collected, would be more than enough to cover last year's budget deficit.

Indeed, the Philippine tax system remains oppressive and unpoor, pampering foreign capitalists and the richest with five-year tax incentives (semiprocess) while taxing hardest those who cannot afford to pay. Here, we anticipate that the deceitful betray deliberations on the proposed VAT hike will have just one concern in mind—how to pass the bill with the least opposition from the people.

We say no to the VAT increase!
We say no to additional taxes!
We say no to more sacrifices that are demanded from the people just to save the inside tit-for-tat corruption!

—BILLY MORATA,
secretary general,
Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD),
70C Edith St., Santan, Quezon City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Pasong and Makarombo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-8707/892-4707/897-8799, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

Abolish barangays

TO SAVE money, why not abolish barangays? The intellectual dishonesty, low intelligence and even lower morals of some barangays of Manila prove the failure of a system that no longer serves its main purpose: providing burden-sharing cannot afford to pay. Then, we anticipate that the deceitful betray deliberations on the proposed VAT hike will have just one concern in mind—how to pass the bill with the least opposition from the people.

We say no to the VAT increase!
We say no to additional taxes!
We say no to more sacrifices that are demanded from the people just to save the inside tit-for-tat corruption!

—BILLY MORATA,
secretary general,
Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD),
70C Edith St., Santan, Quezon City

Also wondering about MNTC's franchise

I AGREE with the letter "What's the rate hike for?" (PDI, 2/22/05).

Where I live in Quezon City, water distribution service is worse than when it was still delivered by Manilans. I just don't know why the present government can't see that, or why the previous government awarded the contract. There is always unloading of water, and repair service is too slow. In office parlance, we are over-zealous (sincere) in our duties, but the end-user consumers, the poor Filipino families, that will bear the brunt of the proposed tax measures. Thus, initially at six to seven billions pesos, using as a minimum wage of P386, would again be forced to pay up one fifth of a (P60) to the government.

Other alternative revenue-generating schemes are obviously available, but these are ignored by the Arroyo government.

Not only the government so seriously refuses to redefine pursuit of bilateral free trade agreements. If the president calling for the tariff elimination of select commodities under the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) would be approved, it is projected that the government would lose P16.9 billion in foregone revenues starting this year (P13.39 billion in personal income taxes and P3.54 billion in VAT payments). We also do not want a raise in the tariffs on imported products, some tariffs that were lifted due to World Trade Organization rules have resulted in foregone revenues of up to P53 billion/year in lost revenues.

The IMF leakage from 2000-2002, if collected, would be more than enough to cover last year's budget deficit.

Indeed, the Philippine tax system remains oppressive and unpoor, pampering foreign capitalists and the richest with five-year tax incentives (semiprocess) while taxing hardest those who cannot afford to pay. Then, we anticipate that the deceitful betray deliberations on the proposed VAT hike will have just one concern in mind—how to pass the bill with the least opposition from the people.

We say no to the VAT increase!
We say no to additional taxes!
We say no to more sacrifices that are demanded from the people just to save the inside tit-for-tat corruption!

—BILLY MORATA,
secretary general,
Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD),
70C Edith St., Santan, Quezon City

No violation by CAP

AS head of the government agency that regulated the pre-need industry, I graciously rejected some offers of a salvage educational plan for a three-semester child, as the country's economy was in such a hurry to take over any particular pre-need company or a personal one. But of-interest situation.

The debate today about how the pre-need industry should be regulated began since the Philippines had, when the pre-need business was started. The Securities and Exchange Commission believed that the products of pre-need companies were not securities in the traditional sense.

In 1992, the issue was resolved by the simple expedient of inserting in the law the phrase "pre-need plans" in the definition of securities. This was done to prevent the congressional intent that pre-need products are not to be regulated as insurance contracts, but rather as securities.

Without benefit of a legal framework of regulation, the 1987 Constitution, the booming, air-conditioned during martial law, has been carried over into the 1987 Constitution. Because practically nearly financed from hundreds of unwanted politicians, remain majority of barangay halls and basketball courts.

The other item that intrigues me is the poor quality of our voting system, in Canada, where a citizen gets to enter the booth, he is given a voter's registration which is needed to vote in the next three terms. We should adopt this system so we can vote on the basis of issues and not on mere popularity.

We should save money and simplify our government.

—EVOR HILTON,
#13 Silver Ave. Loma de Gato,
#2 Villa Ave.,
Kamuning, Quezon City

Jueteng' unstoppable

I COULD see help but laugh in the belief even time I read about attempts to deprive Filipinos/others game called Jueteng. ("Church, solon join campaign vs jueteng," PDI, 2/11/2005)

Like the other profession (prostitution), jueteng has become a way of life with every gambling Filipino, especially those in before-Pinoy provinces where the source of livelihood depends largely on whether one can get Sabong on a close day, or planting or farming on other days, for a month to come. After which, taken there's nothing more to do, he/she resorts to Jueteng as the fastest alternative to earn money. Jueteng is more available hand-to-mouth existence. The important thing is that with one cavan and with only a piece of paper and pencil is hand as investment, Jueteng afternoon first an opportunity to earn badly needed additional income.

Today, it's not anymore surprising to see out-of-school youths or even elementary and high school students run to nearest Jueteng dropbox, deeply hooked on Jueteng as her collector mainly because the job provides a ready source of money for their school and other personal needs, not to mention the plentiful of rice on the family table.

All jues and pisses must governments overcome have failed to stop Jueteng, more, including the outsiders, are bound to fail in their efforts to completely eradicate it. There's no way our governments, or anybody else for that matter, can.

From the idea of making numbers while the operation of the now very popular bets, in the futures that 'tons would "fail" Jueteng, will go nowhere.

Whether or not Jueteng is a gold mine for people in control to win, to watch, protect its operations and operators is no longer an issue. The fact is, Jueteng has already become part of people's lives and societies in many places. Come hell or high water, it will stay or always make economic back.

Legalize it? Come on, man, that's another story.

—VICE SAMMA,
2 Dimalo St.,
Perpetual Village 7,
Barangay Mambog 3,
Bacoor, Cavite

Do not blame Tarongoy, OFWs

WHILE the whole nation commiserates on prayer for the release of Roberto Tarongoy who was kidnapped in Iraq months back, the last thing we'd want is to put the blame on the victim himself.

Yet reports Ramon Tulfo's view that "the Macapagal-Arroyo government should not give in to the demands of Tarongoy's kidnappers," (PDI, 2/24/05) for blaming Tarongoy for the predicament in and his family's to it is the last thing they need. In the first place, Tarongoy and other overseas Filipino workers would not have to expose dangerous jobs in war-torn countries if the economic situation in the Philippines were not desperate.

While it is true that Filipino workers have been warned not to accept job offers in Iraq after the Angelo de la Cruz statement, government has not offered viable alternatives (such as public and self-paying job opportunities) to its countless people desperately looking for means to survive.

The only provisions measure that the Arroyo administration has adopted is the ban on deployments to Iraq. But records bear the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration show that the ban is more honored in breach than in deed. In 2003, before the war in Iraq, only 10 OFWs were in Iraq. In 2004, their number rose to 4,000. In 2005, the government's projection is 5,000 persons increase! Today they number a little over 8,000. The ban is technically a government item.

Recreational officials themselves have said in various news reports that hundreds of workers have been stationed in Iraq without any job like Tarongoy did.

While it may also be a valid option—though unlikely—for President Macapagal-Arroyo to pressure the Saudi Arabian Binladin Construction Co. Ltd., (Tarongoy's employer) to pay the last Tarongoy's remains deserved, "little needs to realize that it is the moral and proper responsibility of the Philippine government to help and protect Filipino deserts when they need them most.

Yes, we agree with Tulfo, Tarongoy's recruitment agency Al Gamil Int., and the People's General Insurance Corp. can be blamed and prosecuted for being gov's departments in defiance of the so-called government deployments ban to Iraq. But the biggest fault lies with the Philippine government, it is responsible in such and every OFW attacked regularly or irregularly deployed.

Aside from punishing recruitment agencies that defy the so-called deployment ban, the government should file administrative and criminal charges against the labor officials responsible for the deployment of OFWs to Iraq, and assure that the proper penalties are meted out to them.

Until the authorities will not provide the best option—creating stable, decent and well-paying jobs in the country—the fate of Tarongoy and all OFWs in distress in foreign lands should be blamed on the government itself.

—CONNIE MACALALAG,
chair, Kilusang Bayan Bayan Party,
1218 Kamuning St., QC

LOTUS®
ULTIMATE WRITING INSTRUMENTS
LOTUS WHITE BOARD MARKER
LOTUS PERMANENT MARKER
LOTUS
AMSPEC

[illegible] Across the NATION [illegible]
Assistant Editor Tony Gerapera

Zambales vice gov gets zero budget

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Not even a single centavo. That, according to Zambales Vice Gov. Ramon Lachaon II, is the state of his office's coffers this year, making him perhaps the first elected official in the country without a budget.

The zero budget, Lachaon said, was the latest ugly turn in the ongoing feud between him and Gov. Vicente Magsaysay.

Magsaysay, Lachaon said, "totally reasoned" the P3-million budget of his office in 2004. The vice governor was reduced to a second term.

In contrast, he said, Magsaysay's office was allotted P75 million for operations and another P60 million for capital outlay. The latter was incorporated in the budget of the provincial engineer's office.

"What Governor Magsaysay wants is to tell just ask them how his subjumat I need in my office. It is only in Zambales that a vice governor has no budget of his own. What is even worse is [Magsaysay] wants [me] to personally ask for his signature for my vouchers and checks," Lachaon said in a statement.

Magsaysay, in a telephone interview, denied having any hand in the budget appropriations. It was the provincial board, he said, that approved the budget.

He declined to answer other questions and asked that other statements he made during the interview be put off the record.

Lachaon, the presiding officer of the provincial board, said it was Kalbo'ong day, the board's secretary, whom Magsaysay appointed to prepare the budget.

The League of Vice Governors of the Philippines, in a March 1 resolution, asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to investigate the supposed move of Magsaysay.

"I hope President Arroyo can free me from this irregular situation. I cannot perform my functions well as vice governor," said Lachaon.

He said Magsaysay stripped him of hands to diminish his chances in the 2007 elections. Rambo Ocejar, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Deployment of armored personnel carrier assailed

TACLOBAN CITY—An official of a human rights group in Eastern Visayas has decried the deployment of an armored personnel carrier (APC) outside the office of Bayan Muna in Northern Samar.

Alex Lagumbal, regional secretary general of the Kalumgud Para sa Pilipinas, an affiliate of Bayan Muna, said the APC had been positioned outside the compound of the building since 11 a.m. yesterday.

Bayan Muna-Northern Samar deems the office in Barangay Canvayan in Catarman were proper with Kalumgud and other human rights groups in the province.

"This is another harassment initiated by the military against our group. We call on them to leave the area and stop this harassment already," Lagumbal said.

The vehicle belongs to the Army's 63rd Infantry Battalion, under the command of Col. Marinello Tiu and based in Barangay Dapdap, Catubig, also in Northern Samar, said Lagumbal, citing the information he received from Locatar Obedito, chair of Bayan Muna-Northern Samar.

The barangay chief has failed to reach Tiu through his cellular phone.

Lagumbal said Obedito had told him that the military officers claimed that a New People's Army (NPA) member was hiding inside the office, prompting them to deploy the APC in front of the office.

"Of course, their allegation was not true. No NPA member [was] hiding there," Lagumbal said, adding that the military men were just using this ploy to harass them.

He said only five persons were in the office, all of them members of Bayan Muna.

As of 3 p.m. yesterday the APC was still in front of the office, Lagumbal said.

It was not the first time that the military had allegedly harassed them, he said. Last year, he claimed, military men tried but failed to enter the office, purportedly to capture an NPA member hiding there. Jeap Ababan, PDI Visayas Bureau

K-9 dog finds bomb

TACLOBAN CITY—A bomb-sniffing dog prevented what could have been a blood bath today in a public market here when it found a live apple-type grenade in a bundle of used clothing.

Col. Gerry Ishmerio, 804th Infantry Brigade chief, said the K-9 dog named "Aldoy" was so restless when it approached several bundles of used clothing at the city's public market at around 11 a.m. Saturday.

"After sniffing it, Aldoy sat on it," he said. Last week, military agents prevented a bombing attempt after it defused a live 60mm ammunition left unattended at Isabel's snack bar here. "Aldoy" was also instrumental in the discovery of the explosives, Ishmerio said. Alberto Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Tribal folk plead against mining

BOAC, Marinduque—After their exposure trip to devastated mining sites here, lawyers to receive relief presented with various information on the mining issue in the country, indigenous peoples pleaded for help so that Malacañang would listen to their stand against mining.

"There's more harm than benefits in mining operations," they intervened during the first national grassroots conference on mining held here recently.

"The minerals to be exploited are not in Malacañang or in the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) but in our lands; we are the ones directly affected," says Atlanon leader Timany Ann Bayticani applauded statement.

Amy recalled that the operation of a Canadian mining firm Boom, Zamboanga del Norte, which started mining in 1987, was so many that could not perform their rituals as the company operated 24 hours a day.

He said the indigenous peoples are not against development but mining has destroyed the environment, culture and livelihood. "It's not our practice to mine because our ancestral land is sacred... we were not properly consulted, we objected," he claimed.

In Mindoro, thousands of Mangyans await their ancestral domain titles, but one of their areas covering more than 12,000 hectares, is a mining site in Villa Literosa, Victoria, said Rizza Ignacio, officer of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples Oriental Mindoro.

Datyang Endiko, leader of the Bayadungan para sa Lupang Ninuno, related how a Mangyan child got sick and died one month after birthing in a polluted river.

"Also during mining exploration, an Mangyan Mangyan woman, who was hunting for food, fell into the pit hill excavated by the company. We have information that other pits remain uncovered," he said.

"We appeal to Malacañang. Isn't our life as important as yours?" Endiko asked.

Endiko said Mangyans followed a long process of community consultation, mindful of their environment and spirits in the environment.

Benjamin Philip Romualdez, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (CMP) president, had earlier declared the commitment of the mining sector to respect and protect the interest of the tribal people.

Romualdez, also the president and chief executive officer of mining giant Benguet Corp., urged participants in a forum last year to build coexistence among, especially between the host of the country's tribal peoples and the mining sector so he positioned to facilitate close relationship with the indigenous peoples. —Rhodessa T. Hevia, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

KAAMULAN FESTIVAL
Mothers, who came all to attend the Kaamulan Festival as part of their thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, harass cute their little ones during the street festivities in Malaybalay City on Saturday.

Despite funding woes, Bukidnon folk go on with Kaamulan Festival

MALAYBALAY (3rd)—The government's austerity measures did not dampen the celebration of the Kaamulan Festival in Bukidnon on Saturday, officials claimed.

Only six of the 23 towns joined the thanksgiving event. These are Libona, Damulan, Impasugon, Lantapan, Manolog and Don Carlos and the cities of Valencia and Malaybalay.

The local government spent between P500,000 and P500,000 in mobilizing contingents to participate in the festivities.

The provincial government allotted only P2 million, compared to last year's P3 million. This year, it limited mainly on the P1.5-mil. loss in donations from big companies, such as Globe Telecommunications and San Miguel Corp.

Raymond Saludes, a councilor of Kadingilan town, told the Inquirer that last year that they spent about P400,000 for the festivities.

"We'd rather spend it for priority projects this year," he said.

With fewer people participating, the street dancing and the talakan presentations ended earlier than in previous stages.

Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri was in high spirits as he saw about 10 foreigners enjoying and even dancing to the local cultural music played by each contingent.

"For the first time, I am happy to see more foreigners visiting us. I figured that would be more next time. The other towns may not have participated this year, which is understandable due to the fiscal crisis we are facing," Zubiri added. Grace C. Alfecio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Sectors boost tree planting drive by mining company

TAMBOAN, South Cotabato—A tree planting drive spearheaded by a mining company got a boost on Friday when about 60 representatives from various sectors pledged support for it.

The project, dubbed "Match To Save," a B'laan phrase for "let us plant," aims to reforest 500 hectares of denuded areas in the town's forest site.

Illegal cutting of trees and unabated slash-and-burn farming have become serious threats to the local forest cover over the years.

On Jan. 21, Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI), partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Mindanao and the Southeastern Multi-Sectoral Coalition for Sustainable Mineral Development for the project.

The program aims to reforest the areas within the SMI area, which used to belong to Australian firm Western Mining Corp. (WMC).

A memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the Match To Save program was signed during a summit here Friday.

The project proponents and representatives said they would plant about 250,000 seedlings of indigenous species in five years.

Among those who attended the summit were representatives from the DENR-Central Mindanao, provincial governments of South Cotabato, Davao del Sur and Cotabato Province, the municipalities of Tampakan, Columbio and Kiblawan, barangay and tribal councils within the Tampakan project, SMI officials, government agencies and nongovernment organizations.

Jerry Salazar, community environment and natural resources officer, said slash-and-burn farming should be stopped to preserve the remaining forest in the area. Agustin F. Sotto, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Farmer gets death for rape of daughter

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

ENCALLO CITY—A farmer from Catubig, Northern Occidental was sentenced to death penalty on Thursday by raping his 14-year old daughter.

Eulenlalan Regional Trial Court Judge Henry Sato found the 48-year old farmer guilty of raping his daughter in 1999 and ordered that he be immediately remitted to the national penitentiary.

The court also ordered the farmer to pay his daughter P75,000 indemnity, P50,000 for moral damages, and P25,000 for exemplary damages.

The victim said she was raped inside their house in October or Sept. 2, 1999 while her mother was away. Her father warned her not tell anybody what happened or he would kill them all, she said.

The child, however, told her mother about it and lodged a complaint in December 1999.

The court said the complainant would not have filed the charge if it were not true, the judge said.

"No daughter will charge a father, especially a good father, with rape. The charges are not only embarrassing to the victim but to the family as well. It means death to the head of the family," the judge said.

"A father so charged cannot recuperate himself by a bare denial."

The judge also noted that the accused failed to come up with a plausible explanation on why his daughter said with would impute a heinous crime upon him.

"No mother would consider subjecting her daughter to the shame of a public trial for rape that would result in the incarceration of the father of her children for the rest of his life if she was not motivated solely by the desire to have the person apprehended and punished," the judge added.

The victim's failure to immediately divulge what happened to her was not contrary to normal human behavior, the judge said. "In many instances, rape victims simply suffer in silence."

The court also stressed that rape was a crime revolting to conscience and when committed by a father against his own daughter, it evoked indignation, revulsion and the disgusting feeling that (untold) has gone wrong.

Snakes, owls antidotes to rats during El Niño, says agri exec

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Expect the snakes and owls this time.

These animals are the natural antidotes to rats that are expected to flood ricefields, corn and vegetables when the drought accompanying the El Niño weather disturbance hits the country this year, said Commander Cynthia, crop protection coordinator of the Department of Agriculture in Central Luzon.

Cynthia gave the advice to farmers as rodents last week attacked at least 3.5 hectares of palay in Mexico municipality of here.

Thomas Ramos, municipal agricultural center, said in a report that rats damaged 377 cavans of rice ready for harvest in at least 651 hectares of farmland in the villages of San Jose Malino, Cansinala, Dolores, Camuning, Calulusan, San Rafael and Anao.

"[But] the [estimation is not yet accurate] in disaster proportions," Cynthia said.

While no similar incident has been recorded in other parts of Pampanga or Central Luzon, the situation is likely to stay, signal a repeat of what happened during the 1998 El Niño, he said.

That year, he said, rats destroyed about 8,000 hectares of farmlands in Pampanga and Bulacan towns near the Pampanga River.

Cynthia said the rodents, growing to less than a foot in size, are known to have their bacteria during extremely hot months. It is during the wet season that they are known to breed.

Known to shift habitats in farmsmearing January, they turn palay and corn by cutting the stems to reach the grains and munch on the grains.

For information, Cynthia said, had been a constant problem since 1998, requiring the DA to spend more on flame throwers and rodent poison.

However, farmers Rodolfo Sevilla is for not very efficient and resort to electrocuting the rats by installing live wire around the plots.

This is dangerous to humans, said Cynthia.

Mayor Teddy Tanseng said the municipal government had yet to decide whether to poison the rats.

"We should first hear the opinions of experts in this problem. We will also find out if it would be feasible to poison the rats, considering the array of rat poisons in the market," Tanseng said.

"The best way to reduce the rat population is through their natural predators, such as the Philippine eagle, snakes and owls," Cynthia said.

Rogelio Trinidad, chief of the provincial wildlife center of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Luzon, said zoltrix and other snake species and owls are still abundant in the region.

But these, he said, are much sought after by hunters either as main food or pets.

Some farmers catch and cook the rodents to reduce their population.

For here on control, Cynthia said farmers, as early as during land preparation for the next planting season, should start cleaning well their plots, detecting and destroying the burrows.

Reserve Corps aids a report from Jon Mallig, PDI Central Luzon final

Bus falls into ravine; 1 dead, 44 hurt

MADILAO, Quezon—A Manila-bound bus fell into a 20-foot ravine while negotiating a sharp and slippery curve in Sitio Sapiat, Barangay Masigasig Malicboy in this town past midnight on Saturday, killing a 5-year-old boy and injuring 44 others.

Police identified the victim as Aaron Lucero, of San Isidro, Northern Samar.

He was thrown out of the Mt. E Princess bus, breaking plate No. MYI 823 as it plunged into the dark gorge.

The injured were rushed to the Inter Community Hospital here.

A police report said the unidentified driver of the bus, which came from Cotabato, Samar, lost control of the vehicle on a curve along the downtown road. The bus continued a metres more, it said.

The slight drizzle made the asphalt road slippery. As it recovered, police said, the bus also hit a passenger bus parked on the shoulder before it rolled into to the ravine.

The passengers said their reliable man-overspeeding.

"The were shouting to the bus driver to slow down but he ignored us. He still continued with his speed driving," said Lorna Pedrino, who rode in the bus to Batangas with her husband Rodrigo, who suffered broken ribs.

Police said the driver escaped after the incident. Rolito Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Starfish destroying coral reefs in S. Leyte alarms gov

By Joel Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN CITY—The provincial government has sought the help of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Coast Guard down to stem an outbreak of crown-of-thorns starfish that have been eating up the coral reefs off the historical island of Limasawa.

Gov. Rosette Lerias said the problem should be addressed immediately since the affected areas had two dive sites, Gaudver's Wall and Admiral's Cove, two of the best coral reefs in the Bogod Bay area and Southern Leyte's top tourist attractions.

The coral reefs are considered among the best in the world by the Coral Cay Foundation, a United Kingdom-based marine expedition studying the coral reefs at Bogod Bay area.

The outbreak of crown-of-thorns starfish has already damaged at least two hectares of coral reefs surrounding the Limasawa Island and has threatened to gobble up other coral reefs in the area if not taken out from the sea, according to Nicli Pernecia, provincial fishery warden.

Overfishing

He said the presence of the starfish, locally known as kulop-ag, might be attributed to overfishing. By known predators, such as the trunkfish, titan triggerfish, titan triggerfish, shellfish and napoleon wrasse, have already vanished due to overfishing, he said.

Pollution is also blamed for the presence of the starfish, which can grow to over one foot long.

Limasawa Island is famous for being the site of the First Christian Mass held on Philippine soil by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's chaplain Fr. Pedro de Valderrama on March 31, 1521. The site of the First Mass has been declared a national shrine since 1960.

The 6-square-kilometer Limasawa Island, equally famous for its many caves and dive sites, has also been declared a tourist zone in 1998.

Andrew Green, project scientist of the Coral Cay, told the Inquirer that the crown-of-thorns starfish could eat up the remaining coral reefs in the bay if not addressed.

"There are tens of thousands of starfish that are feasting on the coral reefs. We would not know the extent of the damage but it would be huge if we are not going to clean it up soon," Green said.

More divers needed

He said that on a day's operation alone, they were able to pick up around 1,000 starfish. "Although dive shop operators are helping us, we still need more divers and equipment to get rid of the crown-of-thorns starfish."

The crown-of-thorns starfish is somewhat similar in appearance as it is covered by a large number of long, very sharp spines (4.5 cm long) that can inflict a painful wound. The species is multicolored and its color varies from purplish blue with red tipped spines to green with yellow-tipped spines.

Dive sites in the Bogod Bay area, which have more than 100 species of coral reefs, are the No. 1 tourist destination in the province.

Green said it would be not easy to plant the starfish because its thorns are highly poisonous. A wound caused by the starfish would normally take six months to heal, he added.

He said a big portion of the corals lying from 6 meters to 40 meters deep (beyond the diving limit) in the southeast section of Limasawa had already been damaged.

Green added that the starfish multiplied rapidly and each of them could eat up 5 square of corals a day. "With its sheer numbers, it's difficult to get rid of them," he said.

Loans to develop renewable energy sources urged

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE HEAD of the international environmental group Greenpeace yesterday urged the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, two of the world's biggest financial institutions, to channel their loans toward the development of renewable energy sources.

Greenpeace International Executive Gerd Leipold said the World Bank must "put its money where its mouth is" and "make procurements against the use of fossil fuels."

The World Bank lends $17 for fossil fuel use for every $1 that it lends for renewable sources of energy, according to Greenpeace.

"It's not enough that the World Bank and ADB say something against climate change. They need to change their lending practices as well," Leipold said at a forum sponsored by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

Leipold warned that Asia, the biggest source of global climate change, was expected to be hit hard by changes in the climate.

He identified China, India, Japan and South Korea as among the top 10 emitters of greenhouse gases in the world. Of the four, only Japan has signed the Kyoto Protocol.

Greenpeace also said the Philippine government should do more to promote renewable energy sources as Asia's initiatives were crucial in fighting global climate change.

While the Philippines plays "a very positive role" in protecting the Kyoto Protocol, the country still has a lot to do to promote compliance with the agreement, according to Leipold.

"It's always easier to make big statements internationally. Domestically, the Philippines can do more and should do much more," he said.

Bel Lumaynas, Greenpeace campaign director for energy in Southeast Asia, cited the country's wind potential for 70,000 megawatts of energy which remains untapped due to the government's lack of policy initiatives on renewable energy sources.

Lumaynas said that a wind potential of only 40 MW was being developed for use in Bangui, Ilocos Norte, identified as one of the regions with highest wind potential.

"It's ridiculous compared with the 70,000 MW wind potential of the country. But we aren't be able to reach this unless the government sends signals to investors that we are for those renewable sources of energy," he said.

Other provinces like Siquijor, Romblon and Southeast Mindoro possess an wind-powered energy sources, according to Committee Magno and Rocco can match the wind potential of turbines in Germany and Denmark, leaders in wind-generated power in the world, he said.

The government should create an investment climate that will ensure private companies using or investing in alternative energy sources instead of just opening up to fossil fuel, according to Committee.

"The Philippines should harness its tremendous wind potential. Not only will this reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels, it would also create enormous investments and jobs for the poor and the provinces of the economy," Leipold said.

Log ban lifted in 3 areas

From page A1

Even as it allows logging to resume, the DENR vowed to enforce more stringent criteria for legal loggers, including the denial reauthorization to the cancellation of timber license agreements.

Only about 20 percent of the 200 integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) holders and 330 wood processing plants would be affected by the DENR's decision.

Defensor said he had already revoked the licenses of 166 processing plants found to be serving illegal loggers. About 500 of these are based in Cagayan de Oro.

He noted that annually with illegal logging claims lives, profits and destroys the law imposed a penalty of only P1,000 on processing plants caught transacting with illegal loggers.

Committee validation

The DENR has formed a new committee to validate the existing logging concessions in Davao, Caraga and Zamboanga to determine which should be allowed to start operations.

Defensor intends to tap non-government organizations to help the DENR in validating the performance of the remaining logging operations.

He said he was eyeing the services of Haribon, World Wildlife Fund, Bantay Ozone and other environmental groups to help regain log ging in the three regions.

Of the 3 that replaced the CENR personnel at a post's briefing last week, Defensor said logging limited to three regions was the most viable.

Citing a study by the Asian Development Bank, he said the Philippines loses only 1.3 million hectares to 2.5 million hectares of forest lot to wood requirements.

Pointing makers had an

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Michael Defensor and reforestation czar Victor Corpuz (second and third from left) on a Philippine Air Force helicopter in preparation for aerial seeding at the Angat watershed. With them are environmentalists Leonardo and Teodoro Gonzales. ROMEO DONGEIT

forward measures that limiting logging to three areas in Mindanao would raise the cost of consumer goods, especially for low-income sites, mostly in Luzon.

While he admitted that transportation would not be cheap, Defensor said the selective logging to be imposed by the DENR this week would not be cheaper for all trades holders than importing wood.

Members of the country's lumber industry asked Defensor on Friday to reconsider the total log ban that was imposed in December, saying it was endangering the jobs of their 1.8 million members.

Allow harvesting in plantations

In a forum at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Rodolfo de Lange, president of the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP), urged Defensor to allow timber harvesting in plantations as soon as possible while keeping the total log ban in presentation unchanged forests.

He said the CFIP had supported the temporary total log ban when it was imposed last year.

But the continued imposition of the ban was killing the furniture industry, according to De Lange.

"We now call on Secretary Defensor to immediately amend his memorandum and allow timber harvesting in private plantations. The prolonged total ban has adversely affected legitimate industries and ignored the culprits behind forest devastation—the illegal loggers," he said.

The CFIP also asked Defensor to exempt minor forest products, such as bari, rattan, vines, buri and fibers, because these could not be replaced by imports.

De Lange said the CFIP was supporting sustainable forest management "for only dead forests, one industry will die, too."

He said selective logging would ensure the continued supply of wood and other forest-based products to businesses that saved from like furniture makers, housing and construction firms, and paper manufacturers.

De Lange said lifting the log ban to only two to three areas in Mindanao would not solve the problems of illegal logging and dwindling wood supply.

Shakedown

Worse, there is a "raging shakedown" of the 6000-million industry, resulting in "massive overtime, seizures, suspending and arrests, reduction by robbery and by photocopy of entrepreneurs, most of whom have been granted the necessary permits," he said.

He said the CFIP had received reports from its chapters, especially in the Bicol and Mindanao, that they had been extorted by marketing policemen and other government agencies in the guise of going after log bugs.

"This has amounted to highways, seaports and airports has become opportunities for jurisprudence (marketing), up the strength of Secretary Defensor's memorandum," De Lange said.

He asked PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay to investigate policemen who demand money from furniture makers. De Lange noted that police checkpoints had become "cash points."

He said the CFIP also had to deal with various government agencies and task forces that seemed to function "without coordination."

"For furniture makers, these agencies seems not to know what they should be doing, which is to run other illegal loggers and illegal logs. Instead, it is the legitimate entrepreneurs who are victimized," De Lange said.

CFIP members have expressed doubts that the furniture industry would be able to equal or exceed its $200 million in export sales last year.

"The livelihood of 1.8 million workers and 13,500 furniture makers are put in grave danger. All in all, the situation in bad for the furniture industry," De Lange said. With a report from Pamelle Obejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Unuse caused Naia 3 power outage, engineers say

THE MASSIVE power failure that hit the multibillion Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in late February doesn't offer would happen to an idle facility, so matter how state-of-the-art it might be, if it was not being used.

Engineers from Takenaka Corp. and the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) found the power failure in an underground cable that short-circuited, a MIAA official said yesterday.

"They [engineers] said the cable had moisture which softened it, causing a short circuit. [All this] was caused by the infrequent use of the air conditioning and lights [in the building], among other things," said the source, requesting anonymity.

The source said that even if Naia 3 was not being used, the power to it should be turned on often to keep the facility from deteriorating. "There should be regular testing of the parts, but such turned out, this was not happening."

The source said the constant checking of Naia 3 was the responsibility of Takenaka, the contractor hired by the terminal's builder, Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), since there has been "no formal turnover by Takenaka to the MIAA management for the maintenance of the airport."

The government expropriated Naia 3 in December 2004 but legal cases over the issue are still pending in the Supreme Court and two international arbitration committees.

Power was restored to Naia 3 on March 2. MARA BLANCO

Survivor helps mark legacy . . .

Turn to page A19

Japanese captives from the Bataan peninsula to Camp O'Donnel in Capas, Tarlac. Of the 60,000 to 80,000 captives, only 54,000 prisoners reached the camp alive.

Each marker indicated a POW's ordeal at each stage, weaving in Marcelo's years. It had an emblem with the figures of a fallen soldier and two others who continued to march, wearily clinging to each other.

But by the time San Clemente began the restoration, only "30 to 35" of the original markers were found still standing, bodies had been knocked over, defaced, or chopped off. The rest of the markers had simply gone missing, carted away by the locals and reportedly even "offered to visitors as souvenirs," she said.

Through the years, parts of the original Death March route had naturally been erased, mainly with the resurrection of the Subic export processing zone, changes in the road system, and the landscape altering eruptions of Mount Pinatubo, she said.

Missing markers

To date, DMR has replaced 81 markers, with the latest marker to be planted in time for this year's Bataan Day observance on April 9, Murray said, helping fund the project are both local and US donors, including individuals, families and groups not at all associated with WWII commemoration.

"But it's still sadly disappointing; we tried to place them in front of schools, homes and businesses, hoping they will finally get the right kind of attention. But they are still getting the wrong kind of attention," she told the Inquirer.

In last year's national elections, for example, many of the restored markers were "slapped with campaign posters," she said, adding: "Again they were vandalized, they were not respected. And I just feel that the youth, the population in general, whoever is doing the desecration, should understand that it's like [writing] graffiti on tombstones."

"Basically the markers are memorials to the dead, so it's such a shame," she said.

Murray was among the American repatriates and Scarsdale who attended memorial services on Samar's Guiuglian Island on March 2 marking the sinking of the island fortress dubbed "The Rock" by American guerrillas in 1945.

Memories of the war

"I was only 5 [years old] during Liberation so my memories are a little thin, but I do remember the fires and the bombings," Murray said.

She recalled that hearing gunshots and cannon fire—even the "peacetime" gun salutes during the Garcia-Macapagal years—would trigger childhood wartime fears. "I still carry that part with me."

Leslie resides in Makati City with her British husband Brian, a naturalized Filipino citizen. She was born in California and was only 6 months old when her family came to Manila because her father, who was with an import-export company, was posted here.

An only child, her family was living in Tacloban when they were rounded up together with other foreign nationals and interned at the Leyte-Samar POW camp in Palo from 1942 to 1945.

After the war, her family spent the next 10 years in the States and later moved to Hong Kong. She was back in the Philippines by the time she was 21, and had since traveled extensively around the country.

Murray had also worked for local travel agencies and was one-time country manager for Scandinavian Airlines. She's now an editorial consultant for Sin Chew.

Going to school

She had no ready assessment about the way during the Inquirer interview. But after a few questions, hazy images started to surface.

The foreign prisoners were not exactly held in cells but in "dormitories" at the UST, she said, with the women and children kept in the main building and the men in another.

But father was among those who rotated in the camp's kitchen. "There wasn't much food. There was only liquor (porridge), and it got less and less throughout the years until [meals were served] just once a day."

Asked if it was hard growing up during the war, Murray, not surprisingly, managed to dig up the more pleasant and innocent of memories. Since the UST inmates were composed of professionals—teachers, priests, doctors, businessmen—they were able to form a "community" so others held classes for the youngsters, the children.

"We actually had a nursery, a school for small children and a high school," she said.

Know your history

Murray could not easily recall any close encounters with their Japanese captors. "All I know was that we had to bow [to them] and there was a roll call every morning and evening. My parents were there and I'm just very glad that we all survived," she said.

Six decades later, whatever she lacked in war years, she more than made up for in assiduous and determination to keep the remembrance and legacy alive and relevant.

"Even though I don't have vivid memories of the war, I'm saddened by the fact that little is known of World War II here," she said.

"I don't know what they're teaching in (history but they're not telling them here. Even in the States, there's a lot of emphasis on Europe. Everybody knows about Normandy but not too many people know about the Leyte or Lingayen landing," Murray noted.

"History is not being taught, or if it's taught, it's not really being absorbed, which I think is a pity for the Filipino youth," she lamented.

"I think it's very important for the students, the present generation, to know their history and appreciate what their fathers, uncles and grandfathers had fought for."

WOMEN and children displaced by fighting between government soldiers and Moro rebels in Sulu await the delivery of government relief items in Panamao town. AP PHOTO

Sulu group says gov't rehab plan a face-lift

Private page A11

convenor of the Civil Society Organizations Illiterati Sulu is a person stricken with cancer and undergoing chemotherapy, and dismissed the rehabilitation plan as "unprofessional."

It is like giving "a facelift and hair transplant" to a patient gravely ill with cancer, she said.

Adnan said that aside from rehabilitation, the government should dig deeper into the causes of the recent clashes.

She invited Dulay to a forum with residents on March 10 to discuss what the people of the la wanted.

'Can people eat roads?'

"Let's find out if they were malls, roads. Can they eat roads? Or I do? Do they want access to sanitary water and learning centers?" Adnan said.

Dulay said she could not attend the forum as she had to attend her daughter's graduation on the day.

Ginoy Talarde, a municipal councilor in Jolo, urged the national government to establish a human rights desk in Sulu to investigate alleged rights abuses and the reported massacre by security forces of a family in Indanan Feb. 1.

Some local Muslim officials said the marauders had targeted the followers of jailed Moro Bureau of Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari and dug gravesites shallow with government troops.

Relief supplies

At least 300 people, 34 of them soldiers, died in the fighting which lasted more than a week and forced more than 10,000 villagers to flee.

Of that number, at least 10,000 refused to return to their homes, fearing renewed violence.

Ms Arroyo on Friday said there would be no "letup in intensive actions" against the guerrillas, regarding a proposed truce brokered by Muslim leaders in Jolo.

A military transport plane arrived in Jolo on Saturday, bringing tons of relief goods that were distributed to hungry refugees in Panamao, one of the towns most affected by the clashes.

Presidential adviser Jesus Dureza, who visited refugee centers in Panamao, said: "We assured the people that government would help them and we are doing everything we can to bring more developments to Jolo." With AP report

Only 16% of Pinoy moms...

Private page A11

born milk formula, said Dr. Jose Allen Olive, WHO Philippine representative.

No wonder 30 percent of Filipino babies are either malnourished or undernourished, he said.

For only that, as many as 82,000 babies—newborn to 6 months old—die every year for various reasons, including common illnesses like diarrhea and pulmonary infection which could easily be prevented if they had been breast-fed from birth, he added.

Alarm bells

The WHO sounded the alarm after a report came out that the Philippines was one of 42 countries that monitored for 90 percent of child deaths were 5 weeks since 2000.

As many as 16,000 Filipino infants less than 5 months of age would increase fewer infections if they were exclusively breast-fed from birth, Olive said.

Milk-supplied directly from the breast is not only free of bacteria, mother's milk contains antibodies which help babies stave off infections, he said.

Among the common causes of child death are diarrhea, pneumonia and sepsis which, according to the WHO representative, could easily be prevented with proper nutrition from breast-feeding.

Giving studies by Ateneo-based scientist, 30 percent of child deaths can be prevented by breast-feeding alone, meaning the baby would survive and remain healthy even without vitamins, water and other supplements, Olive said.

In the Philippines, Filipino moms tend to wean breast-feeding, complaining that they don't have enough milk, and just buy milk formula.

"We need to demystify the issue of breast milk," Olive said. "There's a misconception here that mothers don't have enough milk, or immediately they shift to milk formula."

Until 6, 95 percent of mothers can breast-feed "with no problem," he said. "Mothers should allow babies to suckle to stimulate milk production. If they give them a bottle, it's easier for the mothers, but it's worse for the babies."

The WHO representative attributed the unpopularity of breast feeding to the lack of support from the medical profession and the aggressive campaign of milk companies for mothers to choose formula over breast milk.

There are talk companies that claim the infant formulas could make babies healthier and smarter in, effigies, he said. "That's completely wrong."

Practical reasons

Going studies, Olive said breast-fed children were "intellectually better" than those raised on milk formulas.

In the Philippines, the issue is practicality. "Many milk formula is expensive and breast milk is free. I think it's better to spend money for a child's supplement after he reaches six months," he said.

Olive clarified other myths. A mother down with the flu should continue breast-feeding because her milk would provide antibodies to protect her baby from getting sick, he said.

When asked if it's safe for mothers who are heavy smokers and drinkers to breast-feed their babies, he admitted that the WHO had yet to come up with a position on that husband by standards.

Asia women leaders mask ...

Private page A11

CHANDRIKA KUMARATUNGA

KHALEDA ZIA

the first women to head their nations.

Yet, in all but the case of New Zealand, the women concerned have been the widows or daughters of former rulers and founding fathers, status of whose families have maintained a grip on power all and in one several decades.

"There is strong legacy of family politics in South Asia, where family background takes precedence over gender," Pakistani women rights activist Asma Jahangir, in Hanoi told reporter Francis Pecso.

"But this leadership by women does not translate into empowerment of women in their countries, where levels of female education and social, political and economic development remain low."

In Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was prime minister from 1988-1990 and again from 1993-1996 before she was ousted out of power in corruption charges and left the country in the self-imposed exile.

In the Philippines, the issue is practicality. "Many milk formula is expensive and breast milk is free. I think it's better to spend money for a child's supplement after he reaches six months," he said.

Similar situations

Many points to similar situations throughout South Asia, with ladies here Indira Gandhi leading from the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty in India, and Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga being the daughter of assassinated premier Bandaranaike.

In Bangladesh, women have had a women prime minister since 1991, with two major rivals twice swapping the post—Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the daughter of the country's founder Mujibur Rahman, and Begum Khaleda Zia, the widow of slain President Zia ur Rahman.

That both the ruling and main opposition parties are led by women is the exception, not the rule," says lawyer Khan Asma, a leading women's rights campaigner in Bangladesh.

Despite the high-profile females after both presidents, the number of women MPs is very low in Bangladesh because the political parties don't have the commitment to promote women."

Bangladesh's Parliament has 30 women, but cannot a bill to receive 45 seats for women, although this has yet to be implemented and it has been criticized for allowing parties to select the appointees rather than directly by elected.

BP case

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is the daughter of the late President Diosdado Macapagal, while the country's first female president, Corazon Aquino, who swept into office on the strength of People Power in 1986, was the wife of an assassinated opposition figure.

Political analyst Nicole Curato said: "For country to mired by political elites ... marriages are a form of class alliance that expand the influence of the families and allow them to consolidate their resources.

"When compared to party leaders that shift easily with change in political season, marriages are long-term, if not permanent, coalitions. Philippine law, after all, does not allow divorce."

Sixty percent of women who occupy seats in the Congress come from political families. But with 10 percent, the share of lawmakers's women—compared with 51 percent 48 years ago—the Philippines has better representation than many Asian countries.

Ayman Asia, no parliament has more than a third of its legislators as women, according to a survey released Thursday by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The region lags behind Europe and the Americas and hovers just below the world average of 15.7 percent representation at the beginning of 2005, the survey found.

New Zealand

New Zealand have lost in the region with almost 30 percent of parliamentary seats occupied by women. It also has a female governor-general and top judge.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka rank worst in the report for female MPs, with 2.6 percent and 4.5 percent respectively, according to the IPU survey. India does not fare much better with 8.3 percent.

"There was only one woman MP's in 1990, when the presence of women in parliament and legislatures was high and that was because then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi gave more tickets to women to contest polls. But in the 1990s, that trend reversed," Anis Ahmed in Dhaka, who heads India national commission for women.

But things might soon change for the better, she added. The government had promised to present a bill reserving one-third of the seats in parliament and state legislatures for women. AFP

BIG SALE ! BIG DISCOUNT ! BIG BARGAIN !

(Direct Importer & Dealers)

Passenger Vehicles, Trucks, SUV's, Construction Equipment

Promo Period March 5 - March 13, 2005 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

SITE : WHITE DIAMOND TRADING CORP.
SERVICE ROAD, LAMBAKIN BATO, VALENZUELA CITY
TELS.: 440-0889 ; 440-0401

BRANCH : WHITE DIAMOND TRADING CORP.
MAHARLIKA HIGHWAY, SITE, TOMAS, BATANGAS
TELS.: (043) 529-0809

Malaysia crackdown creates labor shortfall

Private page A11

shortfall of cheap labor in critical industries, a newspaper reported Monday.

Almost 450,000 illegals—including some 60,000 Filipinos, according to Philippine estimates—are believed to have left Malaysia during the recent amnesty period which ended Feb. 28.

An estimated 400,000 still remain in Malaysia.

The amnesty was followed by a raid and arrest crackdown at work sites, which netted nearly 1,000 workers. More than 200 of their were Filipinos.

Malaysian officials said hundreds of businesses in Indonesian emigration centers charged with providing proper documentation to Indonesians so they could secure to work legally in Malaysia was endangering the latter's construction and plantation sectors.

Virtual standstill

A program allowing businessmen who left Malaysia under the amnesty to legalize themselves in Indonesia has come to a virtual standstill because of administrative delays Otoro, The Star newspaper reported.

"I think it is in Indonesia's benefit to facilitate the workers' return because Malaysia has already done its part. Otherwise, we may have to import workers from other countries," the newspaper quoted the Malaysian Employers' Federation president, Mohamad Aidar Abdul Carrim, as saying.

Foreign workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh and India form the backbone of Malaysia's construction and plantation sectors, taking low paying jobs that Malaysians aren't do. About 2 million of them have legal papers.

No applications processed

Malaysia has promised to take back Indonesian workers and streamline the amnesty program, provided they came in with project papers.

As part of a deal with Malaysia, Indonesia set up one-stop centers to process applications from Malaysian employers to legalize their former Indonesian employees.

But as one audit center in Indonesia, not one application has been approved in the last 10 days, The Star reported.

Home Minister Azmi Khalid and a team of officials are expected in Jakarta to meet with top Indonesian officials to resolve the problem.

Malaysia is also sending Dato Seri Ahmad Said, a secretary-general in Ministry of Home Affairs, to the Philippines to discuss the human resources and orderly repatriation of Filipino illegals who would either voluntarily return to the Philippines or would be expelled. He was to arrive in Manila yesterday.

Unfinished homes

"We acknowledge that there is a shortfall and hope to sort things out with our counterparts here," Immigration Department enforcement director Isbah Mohamed was quoted as saying.

Mohamad Johir of the employers' federation said at least two dairy and sawmill companies and plantations... were in trouble due to the delay in getting the workers back.

"Some buyers have not getting their homes delivered on time, and developers will be liable for not completing them on time within the stipulated timeframe," he told The Star.

Foreign workers needed

Mohamad Johir said Indonesian made up 90 percent of the labor force in the construction industry, and Bangladeshi percent and 80 percent on plantations.

Human Resources Minister Fong Chan Onn said Malaysia was already looking at other sources of labor, such as Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines.

Up to half a million Filipinos live in Malaysia, many of them families of refugees who fled a separatist rebellion in Mindanao in the 1970s.

An estimated 200,000 are staying there illegally.

Filipino illegals caught face possible fines, jail terms and whipping with a rattan cane before deportation. They are also barred from returning to Malaysia.

Human rights groups have voiced concern that many of the 800,000 policemen, immigration officials and volunteers raising part in rounding up illegal workers might use excessive force while trying to detain suspects. AP

'Minsan Pa,' Cesar, Ara top Golden Screen winners

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE ENTERTAINMENT Press Society, or Tespress, paid tribute on Saturday to two independently produced films, "Minsan Pa" and "Tuwaghua sa Sta. Fe" by bestowing upon filmmakers of the respective films its coveted Golden Screen awards ceremony at the ICRC Plaza in Makati City.

"Minsan Pa," an idiosyncratic love story of a Gobanon (or guide cleaner/Filipino) and a sagbilmer (Ate Mina), bagged five awards, including the highly coveted best picture plum.

Jeffrey Jetturian was handed best director for his work on the film, while Judy Ann Santos, who plays heroine pre-school teacher Lana, was declared best supporting actress.

The award from Tespress was Santos's second, after having won the same honor for Erik Films' "Initial Shower" last year. "Minsan Pa" is the first production of MGA Films.

Armando "Bing" Lao's work on "Minsan Pa" was honored with a best original screenplay trophy that night, while Israel de Perez's composition "Minsan," descriptored by Jonathan Manalo, was the best original song.

The best actor trophy was awarded to Cesar Montano for his work on "Tuwaghua sa Sta. Fe," a romantic story in the midst of chaos during the Second World War.

Montano directed, acted and produced the movie under his CM Films. The movie was made entirely in Cebuano, with Bobot's protégé Lolita Rivet in backdrop.

"Tuwaghua" won for Sweetheart Theodore the best musical score award, as well as the best costume award for Steven Hoppe and Angie Reyes.

When "Minsan Pa" failed to make it to the 2004 Metro Manila Film Festival's roster of eight entries, its producer HELR Films filed a complaint before the MMFF executive committee (ExCom).

Lawyer Joji Alonzo of HELR Films accused the ExCom of adjusting rules and regulations "to favor certain productions over the others." Four of the eight entries entries were said to be "productions of the Metrowide group," referring to legal trustee Lily Monteverde.

The four movies are "Mano Po 3," "Bubble Gang 1941," "Sis Happy Together" and "Tigpas."

"I'm not going into movie production for the money. All I want is to make a good film as my personal contribution to the industry, at the risk of losing my investment. What a painful is the reality that commercial movie-makers are set aside for personal interests," Alonzo said the heavens in an earlier interview.

Not Alonzo was very pleased last Saturday. While accepting the best picture award, the chunkiest people who helped come up with the film, "special thanks to our lead actor Jomari, who worked really hard. It's not easy to be crying and acting in Filipino, Bisaya and Japanese," said Alonzo.

Another big winner is Star Cinema's "How That I Have It," which won the best picture award for musical or comedy. The film also features former love team partners John Lloyd Cruz and Bea Alonzo.

Judy Ann Santos beat veteran Nora Aunor ("Naglalayag") and Vilma Santos ("Sharo Jr. P") to the best dramatic actress trophy for her offbeat performance in the movie "Isabel."

Diamond Star Maricel Soriano was named best actress for a comedic role in Regal Entertainment's "I Will Survive." Quizon was declared best actor for comedy for his work on "Sa Susunod Nang Habang Buhay."

Ara Mina giving her acceptance speech. a1

Man shot dead in Makati bar

A YOUNG management executive was found dead in the parking lot of a popular bar in Makati City early Saturday morning.

Supt. Alejandro of the Makati Police homicide section identified the victim as Arnon Morales, 28, single, of Sumulon Road, Quezon City, who stepped out of the Purple Pear Bar along Figueroa St. around 2:45 a.m.

Police ruled out suicide as the motive for killing as evidence at the scene suggested. Morales, who was shot once in the chest at close range, still had his wallet and other personal effects when People Post found of security Ephraim Aparicio discovered the body, following a gunshot heard from inside the bar. Two spent shells from a .38 caliber pistol were later found nearby.

As of press time, the police have not identified suspects in the killing but are pursuing leads.

Overheated fan eyed in blaze that killed 1

By Q.L. Pasion and Tarra V. Quismundo

AN ELECTRIC fan that may have overheated is being eyed as the cause of the blaze that killed a 23-year-old girl and destroyed P60 million in a chanty manufacturing in Quezon City yesterday afternoon.

Fire probers said the fire started at 4:05 p.m. at 141 Araneta St., Brgy. San Roque-U, Kamuning. Ng Ana and quickly spread to adjoining houses in the middle of the community bound by Edsa, North Avenue, Aglam Road and Quezon Avenue.

The teen-old Geraldine Lazay was trapped at her house and was burned to death. Her mother, Jenny, 29, tried to rescue her but was pushed back by flames.

Seventy were suffered second-degree burns, one was of several people hurt in the incident. She was rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment.

Bureau of Fire Protection officials said the fire reached Task Force Echo, one of the highest alarms.

The blaze was declared under control at 7:09 p.m. last night.

The night before, an hour-long blaze razed a busy garments factory and a warehouse of silk in Mandaluyong City.

At 10:23 p.m. Saturday, fire broke out inside Great Effects Garments Enterprises Inc., a denim processing plant inside Philtrust Compound on Pioneer Street, Road, Barangay Capitol.

"The security guard of the building called in about the fire, and when we got there, half of the building was already ablaze," said SPO1 Jesse Antonio, Mandaluyo City acting investigator.

The garments warehouse was a rented facility inside Philtrust Compound, owned by one Philip Lim.

Other manufacturing firms occupy this compound.

The factory, which produced ready-made denim jeans, pushed to shipped, but just closed at about 10 p.m. the other night, the end of the company's normal shift.

Minutes later, the broke out on the left side of the building, a wooden wall separating the factory's canteen and clinic at the ground floor, said Antonio.

The fire of yet unknown origin then spread to the adjoining two-story, which housed the factory's offices on the second floor of the building's front area.

Antonio said the factory's vital machinery and other tools, including stocks of denim, sewing, zippers, flat irons and sandblasting machines were destroyed. The fire also ate up stacks of denim that was ready for distribution to clients.

When the fire was put out 40 minutes before midnight, some 95 million in property had been lost.

Fake Lee shirts seized in raid

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) confiscated some P7 million in fake "Lee" brand T-shirts in a Navotas factory Friday night.

NBI agents found the counterfeit shirts at the shop of Multi Fashion Manufacturing Corp. in Bonanzaman Street, San Village, owned by its certain Sherry Tan.

A total of 15,188 "Lee" T-shirts and 18 high-speed sewing machines, all estimated to be worth P7 million, were confiscated.

Charges of unfair competition and trademark infringement have been filed against Tan.

Marianne C. Divina

Rizal traders seek help from execs

CITYDAD industries in Rizal are crying out for help from the provincial government to help them resume existing production costs and aggressive competition from other countries.

An organization of small and medium-scale entrepreneurs in Rizal are asking that an industrial complex, something like a one-stop shop, can do much to help them become competitive.

The complex shall serve as the business center for sewing industries, Rural Importers and Manufacturers Association Inc. president Emelia Quiapo told reporters last week.

Most of their members are into the manufacture of clothes and holiday decors which are exported abroad.

At present, small and medium-scale entrepreneurs do business and hold office in their backyards.

Quiapo said attracting buyers was very difficult under the set up. Edson C. Bendoy Jr.

MMDA advice to car sellers

By Tarra V. Quismundo

SELLING your car?

Make sure you immediately erase your name from the vehicle's registration once you do, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday.

In his weekly progress-over radio dzBB, Fernando warned of scenarios about unwitting the ill-fortunes of change in registration name, once their vehicles are passed on to other owners.

For whoever's name is on paper would be held liable for any violations or accident when a vehicle would figure in.

"Once you sell your car, make sure you remove your name from the registration because that might cause you trouble," said Fernando.

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

72nd Annual National Convention

March 16-18, 2005

The Filipino Architect: Creating Job and Career Opportunities

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

Life Rx

Get to know ANTIOXIDANT CoQ10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011

SUERTRES [illegible]
EZ2 32 42

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
3 4 [illegible] 22 45 48
₱32,382,329.70

SWEEPSTAKES
[illegible] 6 1 5 2 6 5
₱100,000.00

Payatas: From dump to model housing

By D.J. Yap

THINK a good idea to borrow and dump a load of goodwill and what used to be synonymous for garbage would be known for gold... literally of gold, that is.

Plans are afoot to convert a portion of the dump in Quezon City into a model community of urban poor folk who scavenge there.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. has signed a memorandum of understanding for the "Payatas Gumilio Project," a housing program for scavengers in Barangay Payatas.

Above 900 low-cost houses would be built on a 7.3-hectare property near the place where garbage from mountains of waste tattoos.

Private sector funding

Each house would cost around ₱70,000 and would be funded by the private sector.

The project was made possible through the donation by Metro pol Diamond Hotel Corporation Madrigal of the property to the Quezon City government.

Once completed, the housing project would transform the Payatas area into a model community with basic amenities such as cemented roads, a school, a church, community center and recreational facilities.

The Quezon City government would provide the development of the area's right of way and participate in the selection of the program beneficiaries.

Ramon Aspiras, head of the city's urban poor affairs office, said priority would be given to families living along the danger zones of the dumpsite.

The danger zones include dangers of the movement of garbage, which can be consumed danger of collapsing and burning hundreds of settlers.

July 2000 avalanche

On July 10, 2000, a wall of garbage fell on about 500 shanties in Sitio Laguna Bukgalan on the eastern side of the dump, killing more than 330 people and injuring and about 670 families had to be relocated.

The accident site has since been closed and capped with soil as part of the city government's efforts to redevelop the area.

The new development is the building of a ₱1.2-million methane-fed power plant that proponents say can produce the biggest of electricity enough to power 2,000 households.

The power plant may even be tapped to supply electricity to the new housing project.

The Madrigal Foundation would provide the funding requirements for the development of the housing project, which would be built in cooperation with partners from the private sector.

Other partner agencies in the project are Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation Inc., Ignacio Land, Makati Development Corp., BSB Construction and Development Corp., and the Iraq Lupang Pangako Homeowners Association Inc.

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

BUSINESS

John Paul D. Morales
Assistant Editor Carrie E. Nartatez

TOSHIBA

BSP wants IMF monitoring to stay

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said it was keen on keeping the country's post-program monitoring (PPM) arrangement with the International Monetary Fund to boost the government's efforts to put its finances in order.

The BSP said this in reaction to developments by Rep. Jose Salceda, chair of the House committee on economic affairs, for the continuation of the PPM as the Malacañang could gain more public support for its reform programs.

Salceda said the government could be more effective in dismantling its own fiscal mess without the PPM, he said the IMF participants were simply depriving the President the flexibility in making decisions and encouraging the critics' attack.

The Philippines "graduated" from the last lending program of the IMF in 2001 but voluntarily decided to implement some of the conditions between the IMF and its members whose funding programs have ended but which continue to have outstanding credit with the Fund.

These conditions are believed widely as policies that shield the country's economy from external volatility, including its balance of payments position.

"The IMF conducts a review on the Philippines under a post-program monitoring. Technically, the IMF can offer some advice but it can no longer impose policy conditions as it does in the past under lending programs.

"Let's ignore what we believe to be or even talk about assistance from the IMF," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

Salceda said the continuation of the PPM would be next in his agenda after the reforms on the value-added tax (VAT) system were passed.

He said the perception that the country was still under the wings of the IMF was adding difficulties in making the public appreciate the need to levy the burden in the fiscal consolidation process.

"We know we need to raise revenues because we need it, not because the IMF tells us so," Salceda said.

"For now we need a [the] PPM," Buenaventura said explaining that there were still issues about the country's ability to move in external commitments. He said the PPM would help keep the government on ground in maintaining its obligations.

"Let's not distract it—nothing that helps us until we're sure we are already on a solid ground," he said.

Even with the passage of certain new tax measures, such as the reform in excise taxation and the latest attempt, Buenaventura said lingering doubts about the country's fiscal consolidation remained.

In January, global credit rating firm Standard & Poor's clarified the Philippines' long-term sovereign foreign currency credit rating to maintain it with "loss BB, citing the government's "inadequate" response to its fiscal problems. A month after, Moody's also cut the country's sovereign credit rating by two notches, warning of heightened vulnerability to economic, financial and political shocks due to ballooning public debt.

"We've just saying that we can keep it. [PPM] for now. It's easy to exit on

Shipbuilding: Sailing back to the glory days

By Joan Orendain
Data Bank

(Third of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE GLORY days of Philippine shipbuilding were in the 1960s and 1970s centuries, when the country led the rest of the world in the making trade.

There, trusted Spanish galleons loaded with cinnamon, ebony and Mexican pesos plundered, were constructed in Cavite, Bulan, Pangasinan, Batangas, Masbate, Albay, Mindoro and Cebu.

Many of Philippine [illegible] the commodity of the trading businessmen merely borrowed all the galleons' hardwood timber.

In modern times, by virtue of geography, we are dependent on ships for domestic and overseas transport, fishing, defense patrol, customs operations, and search and rescue activities.

The demand for ships is great, but most, if not all, of the steel-hulled ships plying our waters are imported, largely as second-hand

KEPPEL Philippines' shipyard in Cebu

reconditioned ships.

The boat-building industry remains strong, as in the days of yore. Shipwrights still build wooden-hulled boats that government-owned or-

COOL-IT IN SUBIC
ALL-IN VALUE SEMINARS

Change in IRA allocation system sought

By Michelle V. Rerra

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority is pushing for the restructuring of the system used in the distribution of the internal revenue allotment (IRA) to local government units.

The IRA, which forms part of the national budget, is a fund earmarked for the LGUs' respective annual budgets and projects.

According to Neda Director General Romulo Neri, the distribution of the IRA had to be adjusted to make LGUs play a more active role in the governments' efforts to achieve economic growth targets.

Neri, who is also the country's economic planning secretary, said the restructuring of the system had to be done in such a way that the budget for each LGU would depend on their financial capacity. This way the distribution of the IRA can be more equitable.

"This means richer cities or municipalities will have less IRA so that more funds can be given to those that are starving for," Neri said in an interview Friday.

At present, the budget for an LGU is determined depending on whether it is a city, municipality, province or barangay. The size of the land area and population are also considered.

Neri said the proposal to restructure the distribution of IRA would require legislation because it would call for amendments to the Local Government Code.

The code states that 40 percent of the revenue collected by the national government should be set aside for the IRA. The law also states that of the amount, provinces get a 23-percent share; municipalities, 34 percent; cities, 23 percent and barangays, 20 percent.

Neri said the executive branch should push for the legislation of the needed adjustment as soon as Congress finishes the hearings for the bills seeking an increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent, and the lifting of the VAT exemptions of several products and services.

The Arroyo administration's economic team is working on convincing the legislature to approve the said VAT proposals, which are expected to raise over P60 billion in additional revenue for the government.

But the VAT measures are the major concern ruining programs being pushed by the government's economic team to address the country's fiscal problems.

Once the VAT bills are passed, Neri said, the government should raise borrowing on the adjustment of the IRA.

PNOC-EC to complete Malampaya stake sale

MALAKAS

PNOC Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co., is expected to complete soon the divestment of 45 percent of its 10 percent stake in the Malampaya natural gas project in Palawan.

PNOC-EC president and chief executive officer Eduardo Malaki said "only a few more steps need to be taken before we conclude the same two-year exit plan out of privatizing a portion of PNOC-EC's stake in the project."

Malaki said the partial divestment was in compliance with the condition set by the government on a foreign-currency-pegged to a P20-billion credit facility from Citibank, PNOC Assets, lent the facility to PNOC-EC for the acquisition of its participating interest in the Malampaya project. The P6.2bly credit currently at P175 million.

Malaki said the government, through the Department of Finance, required PNOC-EC to pursue this interest as a condition to the sovereign guarantee.

Malaki said the privatization process began in 2001 after PNOC and PNOC-EC formed a privatization committee to map out divestment options and oversee the process. The privatization plan was approved in 2002 by the commission, the boards of PNOC and PNOC-EC, the Department of Finance and the government's privatization council, he added.

Malaki said the committee also conducted an international marketing roadshow in 2003 to draw prospective strategic investors into the privatization program. One was tallied bidding last year, however, a negotiated sale was recommended.

Malaki said the approval of the negotiated sale process and its guidelines by the Cabinet-level Privatization Council last year "has significantly helped hasten the divestment program."

The council is chaired by the secretary of finance with the secretaries of budget and management, trade and industry, justice and the National Economic Development Authority head as voting members.

ZERO TARIFF ISSUE

Court junks steel firms' plea

By Ramon W. Domingo

THE COURT of Appeals dismissed local steel firms' petition seeking the nullification of an executive order that granted zero tariffs on billets sold to qualified companies.

The Filipino Underwater Steel Industries Inc., Pryce Steel Corp., Iligan Steel Industries Inc., Bataan Steel Corp. and Union Galvanized Corp. filed the petition last Feb. 8.

The companies named that Executive Order No. 227, which was signed on May 4, 2000, exempted the iron and steel key that allowed the granting of tariff incentives only for raw materials such as iron ore, manganese and cooking coal.

The so-called coils, the final product produced out of steel billets, are made into cold-rolled coils which are further processed to make thin sheets. Thin sheets are used for the making of flat products such as roofings, panels and tools.

HCI said the color firms' petition stemmed from the board of investments' failure to cancel a certificate of eligibility for investors issued to a rival company.

The petitioners said that due to this failure, the government lost some P300 million in tax revenues.

In a decision promulgated last Feb. 15, the appellate court said the petitioners' arguments were "totally defective" as it did not come with a sworn certification of non-forum shopping as required by the Rules of Civil Procedure.

"The petition is, therefore, not accompanied by a written explanation as to why the service of the petition upon the respondents was not done personally, thereby violating the Rules," said Associate Justice Celia C. Librea-Leagogo, who penned the ruling.

Named respondents to the petition were Steel Corp., the Office of the President, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Board of Customs.

Further, Leagogo said the petitioners "have pursued a wrong procedural remedy."

"The petition, although styled as a petition for certiorari, prohibition and mandamus, in essence seeks a declaration by this court of the illegality and validity of EO 227," she said.

Leagogo added that the Court of Appeals had no jurisdiction over the petition.

Aside from that, she said the respondent government agencies "are by the Constitution and by law beyond the reach of this Court" and "this Court could not be prohibited from exercising their discretionary functions."

We've Moved
to a new office
Our new address & contact number
814 San Francisco Street
Brgy. Poblacion, Mandaluyong City
Tel. (632) 534.8888
Fax (632) 534.5555
InnoTech
IMAGISION

KILL ARTHRITIS IN 5 MINUTES
INSTANT PAIN KILLER BOOST
MASSIVE NERVE STIMULATION
FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Where you find the best.
VISIT US AT
www.jobmarketonline.com
JOB Market
JOBMarket ONLINE

RDMS LITE AND CERES LITE
WINDOWS-BASE POINT OF SALE SOFTWARE
FOR ONLY
P8,500.00
AVAIL NOW!

PRINT PROFIT
START A PRINTSHOP BUSINESS NOW!
START-UP CAPITAL ₱ 30T
Inclusive of Training and Equipment
FOR RESERVATION
CALL: (02) 735-0452
(02) 488-2393
0919-4875363 • 0921-7927501

8 KEYS TO YOUR DIFFERENT INTERESTS
Only from INQUIRER

Your career might only be a click of the mouse away.
VISIT US AT
www.jobmarketonline.com
JOB Market
ONLINE

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE, INC.
The Philippine Stock Exchange Centre
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

NOTICE

The public is hereby notified that on February 1, 2005, the **MARKET INTEGRITY BOARD** of the **PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE** approved and issued its **INTERNAL RULES OF PROCEDURE**. The rules shall be effective 15 days from its publication on the PSE website.

Those who wish to obtain a copy of the Rules may either download it directly from the PSE website, http://www.pse.com.ph or, obtain a photocopy from the **MARKET REGULATORY OFFICE**.

For further inquiries, please call:

Market Regulatory Office
The Philippine Stock Exchange Centre
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center
1605 Pasig City, Metro Manila
Tel. No. (632) 688-7541

Ayala triples golden handcuffs

THE HOSTILITY CONTROLLED Ayala Corp. plans to even tighten the golden handcuffs now binding themselves to their key executives.

The Zobel father-and-sons team, and their Japanese partners in the Ayala board, have proposed to triple beginning this year the number of shares available under the conglomerate's already attractive executive stock option.

"The main objective of the increase ... is to continue the very effective reward mechanism that has enabled the company to attract, reward and retain key talents," said an Ayala Corp. statement.

From the present 1 percent, Ayala Corp., subject to final shareholders' approval during this year's stockholders' meeting, plans to increase the allocation for the executive and midmanagement stock option plan to 3 percent of the latest company's total authorized equity stock.

In addition to the company stock plan, the Ayala senior officers—the company said "not [1] employees and officials" amounting to 3.5 percent of 30 profitable Ayala Land unit.

For instance, Ayala vice chair Fernando Zobel last year obtained a total of 3,790,264 shares through the stock option plan, at P3.09 to P4.05 a share. Ayala Corp. closed yesterday at P8.40.

Jose Ian Tan Jr. Energy Secretary Ayala treasurer Delfin Lazaro acquired 3,504,077 Ayala shares, also at P3.09 to P4.50/share, under the same plan. More than 1.16 million of those shares were acquired for P3.09 each.

At Friday's closing, Lazaro's

(CONTINUED ON B3)

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

The plan may be availed of within 10 years, with the allocation depending on the "vesting percentage and vesting provisions" commensurate with the officer's rank and performance.

Summer Outing Package

Riverview

PIONEER
in Fax Repair Service.

Our excellence in quality fax repair service is proven. We've hit the 30,000 mark!

We also repair monitors, printers & other office equipment.

* Model of Corporate

CANON | SHARP | RICOH
MURATA | PANASONIC | SAMSUNG | HP
NEC | SANYO | EPSON

Unit 2-1 Valero Plaza, 134 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati city

Tel # 815-4201 • 815-4624 • 812-4621 • 815-4627

Looking for an alternative for fingerprint readers?
Looking for a reliable biometric reader?
Prevent payroll fraud! Try RSI Handreaders...

#1 Biometric Handreader in the world!

Recognition Systems

PSBank Prime TIME DEPOSIT

✓ 8.5% interest p.a. - GUARANTEED
✓ No withholding tax
✓ Only P50,000 minimum deposit
✓ 5 - year Time Deposit
✓ Monthly crediting of interest

Visit any of our 130 PSBank branches nationwide.

AS LOW AS P300
FAX REPAIR

KCE KINGS

15% DISCOUNT

374-7963
411-6300

PCs, Printers, Projectors, et al ... for rent!

RENTech

KARL EDWARD INTERNATIONAL, INC.

MAR. 23 to 26
9:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.
Camp John Hay
Baguio City

"the hottest thing in the summer capital"

shop @ the CAP
John Hay
BAZAAR

Interested Participant Pls. call: 372-8493 / 374-3726

* 5 yrs. warranty on compressor
* 2 yrs. warranty on parts and labor

HOME MATE
AIRCONDITIONERS

The Brand Close to You

Palawan: Key player in East Asean Growth Area

FOR THE past two months, I have been receiving quite a number of mail asking me to write about the East Asean Growth Area. So what's new in Esga?

Many of my business colleagues would always express surprise when I tell them that it is not only Mindanao that is actively involved in the Esga (East Asean Growth Area), but also Palawan in Luzon. Why Palawan?

I was told that in the back in the 90's era, Chinese traders were captivated by its beauty, calling it "Shi-LiO Yi," which means "land of beautiful safe harbor."

But there's more to Palawan than beaches.

MINDANAOWORLD

Agi Bagsic-Alan

Palawan in Esga

In 1994, the Brunei Darussalam Indonesia Malaysia Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-Eaga) was officially launched under the Ramos Administration. The growth areas from the Philippines include Mindanao's Region IX (Zamboanga Peninsula), Region X (Northern Mindanao), Region XI (Davao Region), Region XII (Soccsksargen), ARMM (Caraga, and Luzon's Palawan.

With this composition, many wonder why Palawan was identified as part of the BIMP-Eaga, if not for its land location.

There are several reasons, all of which are positioned with the Eaga's key mission and goal.

First, Palawan, although located in Region IVB, is geographically affiliated to the Asean areas identified for sub-regional cooperation. In fact, Palawan used to be controlled by the Sultanate of Brunei for more than two centuries because of its proximity.

Geographical proximity would allow easy cross border investments that would lead to the opening of economic activity among the involved regions in the Eaga.

In addition, the BIMP-Eaga cooperation was designed to remove unfair economic barriers between Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan.

This was founded on the very strong cultural and historical affinity between the three areas.

The purpose of forming sub-regional cooperation is to allow cross-border trade with neighboring countries in a manner to develop the territories.

Palawan's potential to be competitive in international trading with Malaysia and Indonesia, plus its rich resources waiting to be tapped, makes its inclusion in the BIMP-Eaga logical and fitting.

The goal of the BIMP-Eaga was to increase trade, tourism, and investments in the region through the free movement of people, goods and services, the sharing of common infrastructure and natural resources, and lastly to pursue economic complementation.

Palawan has benefited, and continues to do so, from its membership in BIMP-Eaga.

As of 1997, total Eaga investments in Mindanao and Palawan amounted to $26 million.

In strengthening the tourism sector, a tourism exemption amounting to P1,000 and exclusion of charges, were given to all Eaga-bound passengers originating from international airports.

(Continued on page B5)

TYAN

Stable and reliable servers. Where your business demands 24/7 uptime.

www.tyan.com

SERVER BAREBONES

OPTIMUM SERVER PROMO!

with 64-bit AMD Opteron™ processors

POWERED BY: AMD 64 Opteron PROCESSORS

OPTIMUM SERVER PROMO!

PCTrends

Cocktales

(From page B1)

multiple-use south-bow P28.1 million.

Despite the plan's generosity, still only 9.13 percent of Ayala Corp. shares, about 21.6 million, had been availed of as of December.

Dusit wins gatecrasher case

THE SUPREME Court has struck down the P600,000 in damages awarded by the Court of Appeals to character actor Vince Tañoja, who sued after the unbidden guest was asked to leave the birthday party for the general manager of the Dusit Mikki Manila Garden in 1999.

The actor, whose real name is Roberto Bayot, managed to gatecrash the penthouse party by helping a female guest, whom the actor apparently knew, carry a fruit basket gift.

The damage suit had earlier been thrown out by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court but the Court of Appeals, saying "not a few of the rich people read the gossip with screaming," awarded Tañoja, a 1992 BBL candidate for Bohol governor, P600,000 in nominal+ cost of the P2-million he had asked for.

In reversing the appellate court, the SC's Second Division took the case step to review even the facts of the case, and concluded that CA Justices Eugenio Labitoria, Teodoro Regino and Roberto Gen-Salvador had relied on the unconvincing testimony of the actor.

Ponente SC Justice Minita Chico-Nazario quoted Bayot's testimony that he had been "done enough to him" by the hotel executive. Sa by tats, when the latter approached him to ask him to leave as the actor was helping himself to the buffet table.

"It is highly unlikely that the tourist threat at him [as the actor had alleged] from a very close distance," Chico-Nazario said.

The actor, in turn, shouted at the female executive, making a big scene as he was escorted out, because tats, "might at 44-years-old" at the time, had, according to Bituja, started "very strong him and projective against [Bayot], possibly influenced by his associates in his work at the hotel with foreign businessmen."

The SC justice frowned on the Bayot allegation, noting that the two had never met before.

"If at all, the [case is guilty of] bad judgment which, if done with good intentions, cannot amount to bad faith," Chico-Nazario said, noting that even Bayot's friend, a Dr. Violeta Pilad., whom he helped carry the gift basket, had acted as if she did not know him when the commotion ensued.

Bayot, in turn, also sued Pilad., as well as the hotel and the hotel executive.

Money-go-round

► 07'115 Sarang Island Hong Kong, Singapore and London, the roadshow for 500 investments will also ends being IM Isetan Tower (1) by end Hours; Sy At to New York, Boston, Washington DC, Chicago and San Francisco. The pricing and marketing strategy for the country's largest IPO offering, which could raise up to P4.1 billion, is being globally coordinated by Macquarie Securities, the same underwriter behind this year's record-setting Sembirra Mining offering.

► Seattle's first has not opened one of the two planned branches in the Metro Towers, one on each ground floor, both shops being a joint venture with banker turned-barista Antonio Bartolome III.

Heard through the grapevine

THE LEADING players of nonprofit basketball rivals Ateneo and La Salle are close to forming an unlikely team to play in next month's Philippine Basketball League events.

Eschaver Gerard's Allen Romero is putting together the dream team, after La Salle, whose main opponent is ICTSI's Enrique Razon Jr., and Ateneo's future Addie Mobile both declined to join this season's PBL as an not to strain themselves for July's UAAP season.

(Email: mcbrides_pdi@hdsl.net or mcbrides_pdi@yahoo.com)

A Trade Convention and Exhibition for F&B Manufacturing and Technologies-Intensive Companies

7th International Food • Beverage Manufacturing • Technologies Exposition 2005

(F&B ManuTech)

WE'RE STILL ACCEPTING EXHIBITORS

22-24 June 2005 • PICC Forum, Manila, Phils • 10am-6pm

TEL (632) 687.8654, 687.2655 TELEFAX (632) 687.0689 EMAIL cutt@pacific.net.ph

www.foodandbeverage-manutech.com

Every dream has a price. But some are almost priceless.

In terms of durability and cost, the performance of our projectors goes beyond your wildest dreams.

VISIT FOR A DEMO AND FIND OUT WHY!

MITSUBISHI MULTI-MEDIA PROJECTOR DLP/LCD

LINK WORLD INTERNATIONAL INC.

Gov't eyes open skies arrangement in Clark

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE ARROYO administration may adopt an open skies policy not only for cargo but also for passenger airlines at the Clark Special Economic Zone to encourage more carriers, especially the low-cost operators, to service the Central Luzon hub.

Executive Order 213, which was signed in December 2003, gave foreign cargo carriers unrestricted access to the Clark Special Economic Zone through the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, and the Subic Bay Freeport Zone, through the Subic Bay International Airport.

The government may expand the coverage of the EO to include passenger carriers. The order was strongly opposed by certain quarters saying it was unconstitutional and that it posed unfair competition to the land aviation industry.

The Civil Aeronautics Board's choice is bleak for Clark airport "but only for low cost carriers."

This means that even without bilateral restrictions, budget foreign carriers will be allowed to land and take off from Clark once the new policy is in place.

"Requests for additional entitlements by foreign airlines are subject to air talks between two countries and reciprocity. In the meantime, we can open Clark to low-cost carriers even in the absence of new entitlements," said CAB executive director Tomas Medialdea.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza had been proposing an open skies arrangement in Clark for low cost carriers. Pan Pacific carriers supposedly offer rates as low as 64 percent off those charged by regular players.

He said that Malaysian budget carrier Air Asia and its subsidiary Thai Air Asia were planning to launch flights to the former US military air base in Pampanga.

"We can make Clark the hub for low cost carriers. We will encourage our domestic carriers to fly to Clark also," said Mendoza.

He said the Manila International Airport Authority, which had been tasked to oversee Clark's air port, would spend about P2 billion to upgrade the passenger terminal in Clark.

The former US military air base sits on a 2,750-hectare complex with two parallel, 3.2-kilometer runways that can accommodate large aircraft. It has a passenger terminal building that can serve 500 passengers per hour or 1.5 million passengers yearly.

Mendoza said Clark had granted landing rights to several carriers, in the hope that they would soon mount flights to Clark. Last year, the transportation department granted 32 airlines landing rights in Clark.

The Clark airport provides carriers a 6-month exemption from payment of aeronautical fees. The transport chief said this would give carriers millions of pesos in savings.

The Arroyo administration, he said, had been trying to entice more airlines to operate in Clark to help decongest the Manila airports.

The CAB said a Singapore-based budget airline called Jetstar Asia had applied for permit to fly to Manila.

Government asked to keep restriction on meat imports

By Christine A. Gaylican

POULTRY raisers are asking the government to maintain restrictions on the importation of meat and meat products through the minimum access volume (MAV) scheme of the World Trade Organization.

The scheduled termination of the MAV system in June this year, according to the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators Inc. (Pabi) and the National Federation of Egg Producers of the Philippines (NFEP), will adversely affect the country's commercial, medium-scale and backyard poultry raising sectors.

Pabi president Jose Basilio Halabaya, who is also vice president for San Miguel Foods Corp.'s poultry division, said a free for all importation would kill the local industry.

Pabi, which is composed of large-scale broiler integrators led by San Miguel Foods Corp., San Miguel Corp., Tyson Agri-Ventures Inc., Universal Robina Corp. and Sunrich Corp., supplies 90 percent of the country's chicken requirements, placed at about 1 million metric tons a year.

The backyard and medium-scale poultry raisers supply the remaining 10 percent of the requirement.

Halabaya said the group had filed a petition with the Department of Agriculture seeking an indefinite extension of the MAV. The department can in turn endorse the petition to the Senate concurrence which is overseeing the MAV scheme.

The MAV system allows a country to set specific volumes of imports and the tariffs on them thereby limiting the inflow of imported goods. Imports outside the allocated volume are slapped higher tariffs.

"In the absence of a new agreement under the UNCTAD and the failure of recent talks, the country can unilaterally decide whether it will continue or abolish the MAV system," the group explained.

Democratizing the economy

THE PHILIPPINES is one of the richest countries in the world—richer than most countries in the rest of the world—because the underlying weakness of our economy is clear: our economy's persistent inability to achieve higher levels of economic growth similar to that enjoyed by our neighbors over long periods in the past.

In their paper "Beneath the Flood Crisis: Uneven Development Weakens the Republic," Ateneo economists and political scientists blame the thin line between economic and political power in the Philippines for our weak republic.

They propose a 10-point agenda for economic democratization to get the economy out of the "development rut" when it reminds us of the "development rut" when it reminds us of the "development rut" when it reminds us

VAT: The never-ending circus

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Antonio C. Gonzalez

(000) thing I was not at the gallery of the House of Representatives last Monday I would have challenged.

Our congressmen had to be blunt (dea of imposing a petroleum power producers (PPP) with the value added tax (VAT), albeit at a reduced 4 percent. But the PPP would be prohibited from passing on the tax to the buyer of the electricity they generate.

Due to an extension, a conciliation in terms of the VAT could not have been concerned by a bunch of lawmakers who had not been within a foot of the internal revenue code.

The rule says that the VAT is levied on the sale of goods, properties, or services. The tax is an indirect tax, meaning, the buyer pays it to the BIR, indirectly through the seller. This is the output tax. In other words, the seller is the collecting agent of BIR.

A lot of the confusion stems from the misconception that the VAT is "passed on" by the seller to the buyer. The seller only collects the tax, called the output tax, from the buyer.

At the time, the seller sends the output tax to the BIR. But, from this remittance, the seller deducts the VAT he paid on his purchases that were subject to VAT. This is the input tax, a term that has also led to more confusion. Just the other day, an insurance adjuster friend of mine, bewailed the fact that he had little input tax to deduct from the output tax. I answered, "Who are you complaining?" That means you did not pay for anything that had VAT on it. And, the output tax that you will remit to BIR was money you collected from your client, anyway."

What about the poor end-user or consumer? He has no input tax, people say. Under the VAT system, the end-user avoids paying double taxation, or tax on tax, which is what used to happen under the old sales-tax system.

Avoiding multiple taxation is what the VAT system is all about. That avoiding, repeating, avoiding multiple taxation is what the VAT system is all about. All congressmen should read my column of last Feb. 7.

Now back to the BIR if the 4 percent tax is a true VAT, then the PPP does not pass it on to the consumer. The PPP collects it from the consumer of electricity, whether it is the National Power Corp., or the customers of a franchise area, or a big factory with a direct hook-up with the BIR. Thus, the constitutional prohibition on the impairment of contracts is not violated.

Now, let's talk about the exemptions to the VAT law. That will regards to the powers granted to an IPP (Independent Power Producer) under the BOT law between the IPP and, say, Meralco. So, Napocor collects from the IPP on the power Meralco distributes. In effect, Napocor does not pay any VAT. It is Meralco that does.

The exemptions to the VAT law lead to more confusion. Why should doctors and lawyers be exempted from the tax, people scream to high heaven. The doctors and lawyers are not exempted. The patients and clients are. So, what does the government mean?

If the government wants to tax the person who is confined, the hospital should be required to collect the VAT on the doctor's fees. The doctor should not be allowed to collect his fees directly from the patient. This stops the doctor from collecting without issuing a receipt. If the patient is not confined, but is a Philhealth member or has insurance, he will require a receipt from the doctor to support his claim. This will take care of the VAT on most of the doctor's fees.

The idea of exempting those with incomes of not more than P500,000 a year will be an administrative nightmare. If this pushes through, expect Bill Commissioner Purugganan to quit in disgust.

With regards to the lawyers, the client usually will want a receipt because he needs it to support a deductible expense.

I'm not even think of trying to map the VAT on goods sold in the public markets. All a lawmaker has to do is to visit any public market to see how badly this idea is. Do you really think a fishmonger will issue receipts?

I am afraid that the Senate and the House are mangling the VAT system beyond recognition, with multiple cuts and new exemptions. The simpler the system is, the better the administration, and the more the revenue.

The new VAT law should be wrapped up soon. This never-ending circus in the House and the Senate has been running for far too long. And it is no longer funny.

Palawan: Key player in East Asean . . .

(From page B6)

coastal seaports, as well as international airports, in Mindoro and Palawan from 17,000 to June 2004.

Support to small businesses

In a related matter, due to the effects of the Expo, air transport links of Palawan were improved. Last April 2004, Cebgo having terminals, in partnership with South Phoenix Airways, launched its Puerto Princesa (Palawan)-Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia) air service.

In 2000, Palawan and Mindoro collectively received financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), worth $70 million, for the economic strengthening of their small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Currently, the Palawan SMED Council, with the assistance of the ADB, are finalizing the establishment and formulation strategies to foster a stronger public-private sector partnership for SME Development in Philippine Expo.

With the Philippine Expo officials prioritizing the tourism and agricultural sectors of Palawan, are you surely expect great plans for Palawan in the MIMP Expo.

Gil Roger Rose is a strong advocate for Mindoro's Member, Export Development Council and Junior Chair of the Mindoro Business Council. Chair of the Mindoro Link mission of Mimis and National Convention Board. Chair of the Mindoro TWIT. Email comments to authors@inquirer.com.ph

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

AND CALL

(632) 448-5128 to 34

Organize your business like a PRO

An award-winning business management and accounting software solution for all your accounting needs that only you:

- Automate repetitive accounting tasks for increased productivity
- Monitor costs and balance financial statements at half the time
- Do away with the burden of day-to-day administration
- Empower your business and workforce to achieve success

We are looking for interested Nationwide Business Partners for MYOB products. Call us now!

MYOB

Mind Your Own Business

No Free Lunch

(From page B1)

rates only one out of every three non-poor families helps counteract one poor family out of poverty. Even poverty need not be inevitable in this country. The challenge is to devise effective mechanisms by which the haves can share with the have-nots, and widely distributed as an as much every poor family in the country. Laudable programs like the Gawad Kalinga and "Adopt A School" are worthy of being carried up to the national level.

Without commitment to resources such as these, the economic professors warn that the quest for a Strong Republic becomes nothing more than empty rhetoric.

(E-mail me at abalete@inquirer.com.ph for a copy of this full-format paper.)

It's about performance.

LP70+

InFocus

The Worldwide Leader in Digital Projection

Exclusively distributed by:

better solutions

AMERICAN TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

What you need to know to Fast Track your career or change it!

What is the "Fast Track Career Forum" all about?

Supported by: THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ANIMO LA SALLE!

FAST TRACK YOUR CAREER WITH LASALLIANS LOOKING OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER

FAX THIS TO 809-8074 EVEN IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND! YOU WILL BE ADVISED OF FUTURE DLSAA ACTIVITIES

Registration/Questions

CALL: 523-6159, 525-0013, 524-4611 loc. 139 FAX: 809-8074 TEXT: (0920)9159446

E-MAIL:

We welcome La Salle alumni interested to be speakers in future career forums. Please e-mail us the your bio-data to the above contact information.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

RP, Japan move to forge stronger bilateral ties

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES and Japan are taking steps to strengthen cooperation in the construction industry as joint ventures projects among private firms from the two countries reached P6.6 billion in value in 2004. At the same time, the Department of Trade and Industry said the local construction industry's exports to Japan grew 7.9 percent to $2,891 million in 2004 from $175.3 million in 2003.

The growth was attributed to the local industry's competitive advantage in the areas of price and quality over economic friendly operations, customer orientation, sales and delivery and post-sales service commitments.

One of the efforts to encourage further growth was the holding last week of the two-day Japan-Philippines Conference on the Construction Industry in the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The forum gathered representatives from the Philippine Constructors Association and the Overseas construction Association of Japan. Among the topics discussed were issues related to the rising demand for public works and private construction in the two countries.

Trade Secretary Jose S. Sanico and the conference provided local construction companies and contractors service firms to meet their Japanese counterparts and promote their services to possible partners.

Sanico said the forum was one of the results of the bilateral talks on the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement which, reports said, was expected to be finalized within this year.

In November 2004, Manila and Tokyo agreed in principle to ratify the JPEPA.

"Under JPEPA, negotiations brought to the fore the need for a comprehensive understanding of the two countries' growing collaboration in the areas of construction and infrastructure development," he said.

The official added that last year's joint ventures between local and Japanese firms involved six projects. "The business volume is expected to increase further with the signing of the JPEPA."

JPEPA seeks to promote freer flow of goods, persons and services, and capital between the two countries.

EXCELLENCE IN FRANCHISING

Trade and Industry Secretary Juan Santos and Philippine Franchise Association chair Santos Lim laid trade officials and PFA officers in honoring the winners of the recently-concluded Franchise Excellence Awards (FEA) 2004.

In his speech, Santos noted the winners' contributions to the economy and to the improvement of the Filipinos' quality of life. Twenty-two companies and individuals were honored during the event.

BSP wants IMF . . .

withdraw anyway. They (IMF) themselves can withdraw the arrangement if they see clear there is no more need for it," Buenaventura said.

The Philippines had 20 different financing programs with the Fund, although the country is now not dependent on the IMF, an improvement from being a net creditor until 2003, government economic managers believe the PHP4 is still crucial in validating the soundness of the government's economic program.

Being a net depositor means the country's outstanding debt to the Fund is zero before it's contribution as a shareholder.

Increased selling seen . . .

Viewpage B-3

IPO. SM Investment's IPO was rated as the biggest since PHP6.9B Corp., according to PSE officials.

Other big companies keen on holding IPOs this year are power producer Mirant Philippines, broadcasting company GMA Network Inc. and Pilipinas Shell, among others.

In the meantime, online broker 27main.com said in its daily report that the monetary authorities' intention to keep key rates unchanged might rekindle bargain hunting for stocks.

"We continue to see funds flowing in favor of Japan Inc. this year, as developed markets phase from their recent run. It might be high time to look into commodity-related shares and mining stocks following crude prices' recent resounding trend," it said in its report.

It added that the market's immediate support is at around 2,000 and its resistance between 2,120 and 2,150, Elizabeth C. Sanchez

Shipbuilding: Sailing back . . .

Viewpage B-3

rids short-distance transportation services for passengers, and outriggers for fishermen.

There are several local shipyards capable of building steel-hulled vessels, but the limiters for demand is limited to small steel-hulled vessels such as barges, tugboats and fishing vessels.

Two companies based in Cebu—Ironside Heavy Industries Inc. and FIMA Bulkwash Marine Inc.—are successful shipbuilders starting to the export market.

Ironside builds bulk carriers while the FIMA builds high-speed catamarans. Both are joint venture companies, where the foreign partners provide the technology, expertise and access to the global market, while the local partners provide the land, skilled labor and local market access.

Most of the shipbuilding firms in the country are engaged in ship repair, servicing the second-hand fleet which they trade pool returns.

These include firms such as: Keppel Philippines Inc., multi-shipyards in Batangas and Cebu; Subic Shipyard & Engineering Inc. located in Zambales, and Philippine Iron Construction & Marine Works Inc. in Northern Mindanao.

Largest in the world

South Korea, which has the largest shipbuilding industry in the world, has captured 38.2 percent of the world's new orders for ships.

Its order books for the next two years are full. Japan trails Korea by half at 26.6 percent, and Europe is a poor third at 11.3 percent.

The Philippine picture could change, though, as a few good size work quarters in from government offices to try to make the shipbuilding dream happen.

The four Philippine delegates to the shipbuilding conferences, organized by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation-Japan Shipbuilding Center (OECD-SBC), was Egmidio Bongcaw, an undersecretary of the Department of Transportation and Communication.

Bongcaw attended the conferences to learn how other countries developed their ship-building industry.

Special niche

The Philippines, Bongcaw learned, could carve out its own market niche in the shipbuilding industry. Also, he found out that Singapore shipyards enjoyed generous grants, government support measures and subsidies.

One special niche, focusing on building small ships of 3,000 deadweight tons or less, could fit with the government's drive to boost inter-island trade and providing a favorable investment climate.

Bongcaw announced the good news at the IOSH Expo for the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines—East Asean Growth Area) Philippine Exhibition and Conference.

He also discussed shipbuilding opportunities for the region.

It is unclear to list boats. Secretary Gamboa Bongcaw, Bongcaw noted that the Philippines needed to craft a policy and an action program to upgrade the country's shipbuilding industry.

Policy paper

Mendoza then directed Bongcaw to prioritize the development of the local shipbuilding industry and tasked him to oversee the formulation of a policy paper and action programs.

Mendoza's decision was announced by President Macapagal-Arroyo in her 30-point agenda. The President encouraged the "growth of the national shipbuilding industry" as a specific project for job and wealth creation.

Bongcaw and Ferwin T. Suarez, Jr., Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) administrator, have started conducting dialogues with ship-building companies in the NCR, Iloilo, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro.

The dialogues provided a forum for the comprehensive exchange of ideas—in preparation a viable industry program.

Bongcaw said that recent events have reinforced to the development of Philippine shipbuilding.

The ensuing domestic demand for ships, the availability of local funds, and our shipbuilding capabilities are determining the shape of the shipbuilding industry, he said.

Huge demand

There is a demand for the following type of vessels:

- Roll On/Roll Off vessels. Ninety six are needed for the 46 identified routes along the Iloilo Terminal System. The Roll-On/Roll-Off Terminal System is a component of the Development Bank of the Philippines' Sustainable Logistics Management Program (DBP's SLIP). The SLIP is a collaboration between government and the private sector to bring about cost-effective ways of moving goods and people.
- Vessels of various types. At least 120 are needed. The vessels are part of the Philippine Navy's 25-year modernization program.
- Multi-role response vessels. Around 101, ranging in size from 15 to 122 meters and other types of vessels. The vessels will be acquired by the Philippine Coast Guard over a 15-year period.

Allocation

Also, there is a demand for aging domestic merchant and deep sea fishing fleets, where 37 vessels may be over 30 years old and 120 vessels may be up to 20 years old.

To pay for all this, Bongcaw cited the DBP allocation of P12 billion for the procurement of Roll-On vessels under the SLIP's SLIP.

The DBP, in collaboration with the National Development Corp. has also established the KSC Shipcrime Equity Corp., a ship financing facility.

"I commend DBP chair Vitaliano Nañagas II and former Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima for recognizing the need to establish a ship financing and leasing facility to help with access to ship-crime financing requirements needed to support the shipbuilding program," Bongcaw said.

Given the number of ships to be built and the magnitude of the funding required, more than one financing and leasing firm may be needed to provide for the public and the private sector vessel requirements, he said.

Investors for the new ship financing and leasing company could also come from financial institutions, insurance and bond management groups, and venture capitalists. (To be continued)

ASIATRUST Bank

Slash-off
PROPERTY AUCTION
20% Downpayment
11% Fixed for 1st Five years
Market Rate for the 6th to 10th year
9 am to 12 noon, March 12, 2005
11th Floor, Asiatrust Bank Bldg.
1424 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City
P2Million and above
CANYON WOODS (TAGAYTAY)
CALL NOW ... MONDAY TO SUNDAY
7:00 A.M TO 7:00 P.M. : Telephone Nos.: 924-5665 / 924-5772
10:00 A.M. TO 9:00 P.M. : Call Center: (02) 633-1988 to 90
24/7 : Cellphone No.: (0915) 402-8530
NEW MOON AUCTIONEERS

Editor Chela Bautista-Formoso
Associate Editor Lito B. Zulueta

A voyeur's ballet, anyone?

By Joyce C. Abiate

A COLLABORATION of great Filipino music and original Iloilo-Philippines dance choreography is set to enthrall music-and-dance enthusiasts in BP's final offering this season.

The two-night event will be on March 11 and 12 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines at 8 p.m.

BP's "New Filipino Pinoy Musicista Ryan" will feature a number of contemporary dances choreographed to compliment Ryan Cayabyab's 2004 bestseller album "Great Filipino Love Songs," and his own orchestration of Philippine folk songs "Songs of the Islands."

Both compilations will be performed by the Sun Majuel Philharmonic Orchestra.

"When Iloilo Philippines approached me to ask if they could dance The Great Filipino Love Songs/ I recorded with the orchestra, I said 'Sure, and why don't we push it further by collaborating and performing the music live with the orchestra to make it more exciting?'" Cayabyab said in an interview.

"I also let those letters in this CD which I was working on, recommendation or encouragement of Filipino folk songs like 'Nata Ito Pang Bisaya,' 'Sorsogonsogi,' 'Usbay,' 'Si Filimon'... kailangan ma ling said I let them listen to it, and they wanted to do it also," he added.

According to the composer, this collaboration with Iloilo Philippines was also prompted by his desire to promote and preserve folk...

"Marami na rin tayong mga ... sa hindi alam ang mga folk songs natin. So, hopefully, by making it more accessible, danceable and popular, marerinig ito ng bagong generation of Filipinos. We will be doing it live with the orchestra and with a dance pa," Cayabyab said.

BP artistic director Augusto Damian III said the presentation would have a distinctive style to capture the audience's attention and make them a part of the evening's productions.

"Part of the look of the show is voyeuristic. You will see the dancers putting their makeup on, the technicians moving everything... with this, the public becomes part of the entire dance. It will look a little bit like somebody's looking through a keyhole while the dancers are dressing up," he said.

The choreography of the 11 tracks in the "Great Filipino Love Songs" and the 11 tracks of the "Philippine Folk Songs" is divided among Damian, Tony Fabella, Alden Luganain, Christine Crame, Irah Jhuprez and Rosy Sarabia.

As BP closes its 36th season, Damian invites everyone to this two-night only presentation. "This is art. Whether good or bad, it can add something to your life, to your knowledge of things, to your appreciation of things. And you can always like it or dislike it. But if you don't make an effort of going, it won't make a difference in your life. So go and watch the show."

For tickets, call 5115000 or 5115222.

CLARK Kundayen, Craig Gonzaga and Jojo Mamangon in Alden Luganain's choreography of "Bahay" and "Lakad ng Araw"

"NEO Filipino" collaborators (seated) Tony Fabella, Ryan Cayabyab and Augusto "Gus" Damian III. Rosy Sarabia, Christine Crame, Alden Luganain and Irish Jhuprez

KWS-BELLE Pia Mesa and Clark Kundayen in Christine Crame's "Gaano Ka Ikaw Kamahal"

How is Philippine literature doing?

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

WHAT is the state of Philippine literature? This question was posed to panelists at a recent regular forum of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, titled "Timog Talakayan," for students.

"Depends on the university," countered poet Nerissa Ilarde-Ata. "For me (in the University of Santo Tomas), it is in a good state, in good shape, definitely in good shape. Writers are coming out with books, inspiring their students. Young writers are coming out. And as you know, there was oral literature—must be how we have literature: 'The babaylan...'"

The other panelists were Angelo V. Suarez of the Thomasian Writers Guild; Paolo Manalo, literary editor of the Free Press magazine, and "alter native" writer Libay Cinco-Rigor Jan. Facilitator was Ed Calingacion of CCP.

The idea of literature should not be confined to books, Manalo informed, and Suarez expounded on this: "Blurring inappropriate (are) not a lot of this). For example, we take slogans for granted. You can see it in the passages." "This is also literature, he believed.

"As in 'Hindee Nee Pity'," intoned Calingacion, then he then asked the young members of the audience what books they read, or if they read at all. If so, what medium, English or Filipino?

One student said English made for more exciting reading; another said she read in both languages—Tagalog. A third student stood up and said she reads either in English and Filipino (not "it has to be interesting and to add to our knowledge (slipping in Cagbalete Island, Pity (TP) quiz show question)."

Visual

The panelists noted that the world is becoming more and more visual. The new generation, they observed, has no refuge to markets, tried to reach out somehow in a new way. Philippine literature in various languages is in the Net, and writers—as the recent PEN Conference was told—must avail of high technology as writers, retrieve and improve one another's stories, and the stories of their students as well.

And Sid Hildawa called attention to the falsehood of cult society's who read literary text (print).

A CCP forum shows literature is evolving beyond books

One student said English made for more exciting reading; another said she read in both languages—Tagalog. A third student stood up and said she reads either in English and Filipino (not "it has to be interesting and to add to our knowledge (slipping in Cagbalete Island, Pity (TP) quiz show question)."

Visual

The panelists noted that the world is becoming more and more visual. The new generation, they observed, has no refuge to markets, tried to reach out somehow in a new way. Philippine literature in various languages is in the Net, and writers—as the recent PEN Conference was told—must avail of high technology as writers, retrieve and improve one another's stories, and the stories of their students as well.

And Sid Hildawa called attention to the falsehood of cult society's who read literary text (print).

FREE Press literary editor Paolo Manalo; young poet Angelo V. Suarez of the Thomasian Writers Guild and poet-teacher Marilisa Gamboa of UST

THE AUTHOR with some students

ED Calingacion of CCP Media Arts Division

New focus on Rizal

By Christine Godinez-Ortega
Contributor

JOSE Rizal, considered a literary hero in many parts of this country, gets extra focus in "The Native Sky: Studies in the Life and Writings of Jose Rizal" (Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 2004. 395 pages), Fr. Miguel Bernad's 23rd book.

Summing up the true essence of the collection in the last essay on Rizal going down the roads of time to purchase it from Casimiro Ponticelli in Cuigsina Point and Che Wan-Li, Fr. Bernad's last act when he received the literature's School of Humanities Award in 2003.

Speaking of Rizal as the quintessential humanist who sought "to find harmony rather than conflict between science and art, between literature and technology," the essay succinctly reveals insights into the balanced outlook Rizal had about life, his people and the Spanish colonial government.

The well-documented and well-written essays are strongly factual, drifting from one era to another in Rizal's life, making an entire Rizal more today.

The book should prove instructive to students who receive from memory the "Mi Ultimo Adios." Fr. Bernad tells how the poem's original manuscript was discovered, updated out of Rizal's memory and finally brought back to the Philippines.

Noteworthy too are Fr. Bernad's comparisons of the translations by Iloy, Berberabe, and Zaragoza of "Mi Ultimo Adios" and his exposition of Rizal's "Sa Aking Mga Kabata" and "Sa Dalampasigan" (Que aroma es ésta y no abandonarán el cielo sino los rayos en su nacer al olvido... / Ese fragrance is the soul, and the soul does not leave the land the light of its sunrise").

The novels are realistic and historical. Fr. Bernad reminds us that Rizal is speaking in the parenthetical, "Hindi sana," which emphasizes the conscious aspect of narrative writing.

Fr. Bernad feels not speculation on Rizal's writing habits by describing Renata's claim that Rizal wrote the "Mi Ultimo Adios" a day before his execution. Fr. Bernad flatly states, and we agree, that the poem, "a highly polished, highly complex composition, rich with internal rhymes and assonances, (with its literary)" could not possibly be written in a day!

Fr. Bernad wellness with the information that Rizal was capable of writing a third novel, this time in Tagalog, against suggestions that Rizal failed to write one because he could not handle it. Certainly Fr. Bernad in the lively prologue where he asserts that Rizal knew his native language well enough to write a novel in it.

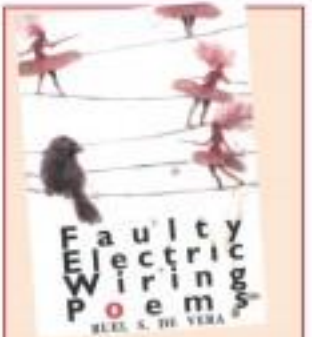
But there may be basis for the suggestion. Rizal did not finish it. While in Hong Kong with his family in 1891 and en-joined by Blumentritt, a biography of Rizal by Jose Ma. Guerrero, Rizal had written: "I am finding it very difficult to write the book because I cannot express many of my thoughts freely without introducing neologisms, furthermore I have not had much experience writing in English."

This is of course comes from a part who spoke and wrote in many languages and after writing the "Noli" in Spanish instead of in French as he had originally planned.

Filipinos must read this book to help them understand Rizal's debate on the past, which he mentioned him throughout his brief life. His example may be pitted against the current tendency towards specialization and the craze for "packaging."

Filipino must read this book to help them understand Rizal's debate on the past, which he mentioned him throughout his brief life. His example may be pitted against the current tendency towards specialization and the craze for "packaging."

Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo," often inaccurately said to have been transported "Minerva Ida" to the country from Europe, remain, says Bernad, keepers in "Utopia and Rise of the Filipino Novel," in "the most important literary works by a Filipino writer, animating Filipino consciousness to this day setting standards no Filipino writer of any century.



De Vera launches new poetry book

AWARD-WINNING poet and journalist Ruel S. De Vera's new book, "Faulty Electric Wiring Poems," will be launched on March 11 at the Ateneo de Manila University's Department of Communication at 6 p.m.

De Vera, the author and editor of seven books including his first collection of poems, 1996's "The Most Careful of Strangers," presents his latest lyrical reflections of young adulthood and doomed romance in the 39 poems that make up "Faulty Electric Wiring."

It is published by the Ateneo Office of Research and Publications. De Vera is the poetry editor of the Sunday Inquirer Magazine and teaches journalism at the Ateneo. His writing has received the Catholic Mass Media Award, the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Award for Literature and the Philippines Free Press Literary Award.

Book on male Filipino writers to be launched

"MANLILIKHAIN," a serious study and interviews on contemporary male Filipino writers, will be launched on March 10, 3 p.m., at the Bahaygang Claro M. Recto, Bahaygang Rizal, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

The book is published by the UP press.

Scholars Dr. Soares Torres Pound Alvarez C. Aguire conducted the lengthy one-on-one talks with writers like Ricky Lee, Jose F. Lacaba, Rimmerdin Lumbera, Ma. Sheila Bautista, Bernardo P. Bagaoisan Jr. and Roland B. Tolentino. A series of synoptic essays introduces each of the five chronologically arranged sections.

The book is a helpful aid for Philippine literature researchers and students for it offers an informative look into the private worlds of renowned Filipino male storytellers, fictioneers and poets.

Call 9298133.

Spotlight on Tom Wolfe

TOM Wolfe is PowerBooks Specialty Store's author of the month. A journalist, he experimented with all sorts of literary techniques within the construct of a non-fictional article, and his style became known as New Journalism.

His books—"The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby" and "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test"—were celebrated in the 1960s.

In the 1970s, Wolfe published works like "The Painted World," a controversial book about the American art world, and "The Right Stuff," an account of the early space program and the pilots who became America's first astronauts, which won the American Book Award for non-fiction.

Wolfe's first novel, "The Bonfire of Vanities," a story about the money-frenzied 1980s in New York, published in 1987, was one of the biggest books of the 1980s. In 1989, he managed the literary community with an article in Harper's Magazine criticizing modern American novelists for failing to fully engage with their subjects. He believed that the only thing that could save modern literature was a greater reliance of journalistic techniques. In effect the novelist becomes the reporter—as he had done in writing "Bonfire."

Wolfe continues to create waves in the literary community with his latest novel, "I Am Charlotte Simmons," which talks about sexual promiscuity on contemporary college campuses.

PowerBooks is at Greenbelt 4 (753-0428/29), Megamall (635-2809 or 90), Alabang (850-8862 or 63) and Shoemart (725-0372).

TOM WOLFE

Mag:Net toasts book on convent education

IN CELEBRATION of Women's Month, Anvil Publishing Inc. has released "Behind the Walls," edited by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard and Shirley Ong Ocampo. The book was recently launched at Magnet Pizza, Banco de Oro, Makati City.

The book features 38 essays by graduates of Catholic convent schools nationwide. The stories explore the mystique of Catholic education and relive the joys and pains of convent women.

Manguerra Brainard considered St. Theresa's College in Cebu and Manila, and is Maryknoll in Quezon City. Ong Ocampo was educated in St. Scholastica's College, St. Theresa's College in Quezon City and Maryknoll.

Rep Children's Theater audition

REPERTORY Philippines is holding auditions for its upcoming production of "The Emperor's New Clothes" on March 9 at 2 p.m. at the REP Gallery in Xen 1900 Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City.

Open to all amateur and professional actors, 16 years old and above, the auditions will be preceded over by Repertory Children's Theater (RCT) artistic director Joy Virata. Interested parties should bring a resume, recent 2x2 photos, and a photocopy of their birth certificate. Those from Grade 5 to 10 are encouraged to audition.

Rehearsals will begin on November 2005.

Registrations for the auditions will start at 1 p.m. Rehearsals are scheduled Sundays in June.

THE NEW! Inaugural Baguio Central School is regulated to the green-and-white color scheme that is the established hallmark of old Baguio architecture.

FREE 8 MSA Books
including ✦ Math and English handbooks
✦ guide to Colleges and Universities

MSA
COLLEGE ENTRANCE and SAT Review for UP, ATENEO, LA SALLE UST, San Beda, St. Paul and other top universities abroad

Your Education. Your Future!

MSA makes you be what you want to be!
425-6862 • 525-4602
633-0071 810-1207 890-6590 840-8263 840-8265 355-2191
633-8072 813-8943 890-6591 355-2181

Baguio school renovated

ON MARCH 12, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone will inaugurate the restored Baguio Central School, the second heritage schoolhouse to be restored by the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) for the Heritage Schoolhouse Program of the Department of Education.

Baguio Central School has quite a history. Organized during the early American colonial era by a teacher from the American military, the school originally had 25 students holding classes in one room of the house of Rufo Jacinto Mateo Carrillo, one of the founding fathers of Baguio.

The school moved in 1901 to another house where the present market now stands. It expanded into an industrial school where American teachers taught livelihood trades like blacksmithing. The school moved once again. This time it boasted of a core classroom building, a dormitory and a mess hall-kitchen building on a small campus that had a natural swimming hole as centerpiece.

The present school built in 1923 shares a hill with the City Hall overlooking historic Burnham Park. Strategically located, Baguio Central School has one of the best views of Baguio.

Originally fitted out with 11 classrooms, the two-story building was originally constructed of concrete and Baguio pine. Its simple architecture echoed that of its neighbor, the Baguio City Hall, including the two-story colonnade at the center of each building serving as its main entrance.

Destroyed by American bombing in 1945, the building was rebuilt in 1946 and although it has been in use since then, it fell victim to the usual poor maintenance that most government buildings suffer from.

There were many surprises during the restoration process. Beneath hideous linoleum floor covering were the original wide floorboards of thick Benguet pine supported by solid pine floor joists, wood no longer available these days and worth a fortune.

Interior partitions and tall wooden doors

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

turned out to be handcrafted out of Benguet pine as well, hidden from view by thick layers of paint.

The most interesting discovery was that the entire set walls of the restored first story also of pine planks, covered over with successive coats of paint. Due to the deteriorated condition of most of the wall planks, they could no longer be restored.

The restored school recaptures its historic ambiance while being fitted out with modern requirements such as glass panels to make classrooms visible from the corridors, basement study setting and an upgraded auditorium for small presentations. The basement was dug out to provide four additional classrooms.

The restored school is painted in the green-and-white color scheme associated with Baguio homes dating from the city's historic days as the American colonial Hill Station that was once the Philippines' summer capi-

BUSINESS 11

ELMC SPECIAL ECONOMY CLASS
WCT Wilma Cruz-Tapalla
www.wctacademe.com

"DAMASCUS," by Anne Xue

Women take art to heart in Heart Center show

"GRAPHINE or Crayola," by Honey Bacol

"MADURAI IV," by Ida Robles-Ching

THE PHILIPPINE Heart Center presents "Visually Women" to...
...Inspired March 26 at the Lobby of PHC's Medical Arts Building, East Avenue, QC.

Participating artists include Susan Aquilino, Rona Asuncion, Janice Bacol, Ida Ching, Joy Chua, Heidi Co, Eunice Dimson, Belinda Fernandez, Miranda Francisco, Vivian Go, Phoebe Gonzaga, Kristelle, Clarice Navidad, Dyna Ondoy, Molly Ong, Arabelle Paa, Suzanne Ramos, Anel Solis, Tina Tibung, Aileen Ty, Anne Xue, and Dr. Zen Yu.

The artists – members of Iloilo, Baha at Tinta Art Group – celebrate womanhood with various modes in acrylic, oil, pastel and watercolor. Call 981-8000 loc. 8 or 4022092 or Honey Bacol, 0917/9339930/5137484.

Reliving the old haunts

By Gino Gumbanois
Contributor

THERE is an air of surrounding nostalgia in this show by four noted artists from Bulacan. "Reliving Haunts" (at Pinto...ower Art Gallery, 864 Mesgrandi, until March 17) shows scenes slowly disappearing from view: ancestral houses, antiques for building and centuries-old churches.

Four artists have taken it upon themselves to do their share in the task of cultural preservation. Arthur, the most senior of the four, comes from Bagasbas and his talent is synonymous with the subject of churches. He has painted practically all of the major ones of worship in the country, travelling to the remotest places and documenting his subject with locals and saints.

His works have been included in this year's calendar of the Manila Cathedral, which comes with annotation of various churches and how they have withstood the test of time.

Dessy has an unerring eye for capturing the subtle character of churches, not simply architectural wonders but, first and foremost, ...

Hanna Pangan, who hails from San Rafael, has lived in Apalit, Pampanga, for many years, is a hyper-realist artist but long specialized in three-dimensional paintings, evident in the manner in which he depicts the interiors of mansions in relation to the outdoors. His trademark is the highly elaborate rendering of interwoven floor mosaics in the interiors of the homes of the affluent Bonanza folk. Combining paint with real wood that he himself designs, Pangan conveys the impressible aura of the...ormer mansions and manors, as well as the artistic and cultural upbringing of people as that rate as influential in their well-appointed homes.

Cris Velasco, from Bulacan, was once an...ntract artist who started realist when he became enamored with the subject of old houses. Unlike Pangan, however, Velasco focuses on the detail of the façade of stately mansions. Eschewing the view taken by Pangan, he prefers to work on windows and balconies, and applies extensive latticework that he himself designs and executes. The work finds with the patience that he seems to enthrone the genius of age.

Irene Velasquez takes a more accompanying view of the town as seen in its plaza, with the church in the background and the bandstand as...enery that now dominates these places, from ambulant vendors to school bands. A graduate of the University of Santo Tomas College of Fine Arts, major in painting, Velasquez is less enamored with structural grandeur than with the landscape around it. The scenes he chooses to paint have a life of their own, and the feeling they evoke is the viewer transcends mere nostalgia to become the artist's own tribute to our people's zest for life.

Debunking Dalisdan

The works of Roberto Dalisdan are themselves a throwback to the golden age of abstract impressionism, having come of age in the late-1960s. In one more than just a witness to the...

"MAESTRAL: House of Dr. Jose Rizal," by Danny Pangan

"SAN Agustin Church," by Al Perez

"TWO Anonos," by Roberto Dalisdan

"SAN Agustin Church Bohol, Bulacan," by Ervin Velasquez

first Quarter Storm and the subsequent Martial Law years.

Dalisdan was a student at the University of Santo Tomas and later at the...ntin university, where he was a standing member, doing illustrations for magazines and other publications of pro-martial law era.

"Images by the Bay" at the Heritage Art Center (my Walk, SM Megamall, until March 17) belatedly pays tribute to the flowering of abstract art...nthen the late Jose Joya, most historical artist, was among the leading lights. Dalisdan was then in good company...mentored no less than by Joya himself, and the founding fatalistic of the New York School, particularly Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning and Robert Motherwell.

Said he had a leave in the person of Fernando Zobel, who readily bought his work and later donated it to the...ns of Manila Art Gallery.

Now 60, Dalisdan has retained a great deal of his abstractionist's energy and intensity, as his friend Edwin Wilamarao writes in his introduction to the artist, with their "blustery mind-swept quality brought about by a cascade of dashings, scratches, random strokes and arrows"...the images evoke the savage unrest of the city, particularly that of Roxas Boulevard and Manila Bay, where land and sea intervene in a final fathoming from the sky.

The suite of acrylic paintings is particularly distinctive in its evocation of a particular time and site where colors coalesce and collide in well-orchestrated performances. Indeed, the viewer is enabled to...ntemporary triggered by the artist's frequent jaunts, now southward, with even greater additional force, in a show that has taken a lifetime to finally put together.

Ebulliently joyful and spiritually serene

By Stephanie Francisco
Contributor

BASIL Lobajo's "Fortune Plants and Other Paintings" (at Galeria Joaquin in San Juan) and Carl's Magno's "Abounding Prosperity" (at The Gallery, Prestige Cars BMW) are welcome forays of fresh air.

Both shows have an unmistakable sense of optimism. Also noticeable is the pure enjoyment of the artists as they tackle diverse subjects and concepts. Delicious, too, are the highly skilled and adept executions of the paintings in their chosen media—Lobajo in oil on canvas and Magno's in mixed media.

Lobajo's representational works are executed in celebratory colors, oozing with joy and bring happy upbeat thoughts to the viewers.

Magno's abstractions are spirited and sensuous. They speak almost in silent, ancient tongues. If they sing, they sing in subsurface tones, pounding the viewer stirred for provocative, intuitive thought.

This year Lobajo turns 60, after a snark-ridden battle with a lung problem. He has had an illustrious 40-year career, which started with the highly imaginative abstract art pieces for his first solo shows with the Luz Gallery. Twenty years ago, he shifted to surrealism.

Although one does not find macabre floating bodies, distended torsos, beginners and other surrealist fare in the show, the Lobajo surrealist mischief pictures through the 20 works.

"Growing" is erotic, reminding one of a lover's tight embrace. "Grow" has Lobajo's red-orange vine surrounded with green glowful plants. "There is no...ne growing on the side of the moon."

In "Fall," Lobajo maximizes the composition. It shows a white plant growing from the sun-scorched...

"Hanging Garden" has the lonely hanging from the ground instead of down. Structural middle-like roots grow on the surface of the swamp in "Bed."

Richness

Magno's canvases are most certainly non-representational. He is an apostle of the richness of his colors, evoking profusions of three gems by suggests images of metals, sand, stone: gold and copper. Yet, with their abstract resilience, they are transformed into contemporary jewels perfect for today's modern homes and rooms.

"Ancient Richness" is a play on earth tones, copper, turquoise and metallic colors. "Imperial Courtyard," "Imperial Palace," "The Summer Palace" and three other paintings are developed with predominantly royal Mandarin colors.

"Golden Harmony" is in metallic rust, at once modern and timeless. Most of the works are 48" x 48" although in this show Magno introduced the smaller 24" x 24" in noteworthy works such as

"Fall," by Basil Lobajo

"Precious Metal," "Golden Grandeur," "Hope of Glory" and "Good, Green and Liberal."

Although Magno's works are artistic anthropological bulletins, they evoke a strong sense of spirituality. One will notice almost folded as praise messages in most of their surfaces. The "Imperial" paintings are exhibited "Christian Blessed" while the other paintings are about peace, harmony and tranquility.

Galerie Joaquin is at 371 D Guevarra St. Tel. 7256552. The Gallery at Prestige Cars BMW is at 2329 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati.

E-mail the author at stephfrancisco@inquirer.com.ph

"GOLDEN Grandeur," by Carl's Magno

Saturday Group in Davao, Garibay at West, Farol at Avellana

"SAMAD Smiles," by Cuita at Royal Mandaya

VISUAL ARTS

COBY PAINTING, NOTABLE WORKS UP FOR AUCTION

The Marian Missionaries of the Holy Cross, led by Rev. Fr. John Flo. Cordero, with Metro Gallery, will hold the art exhibit auction, "A Seminary for the Marian Missionaries of the Holy Cross," on March 9, 6 p.m., at the Cuirio P. Ronquillo Theater lobby of the RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City.

The Marian Missionaries of the Holy Cross is a Filipino religious congregation committed to the moral and spiritual formation of the youth, especially in the public schools and prisons.

The exhibit auction will have works by former President Corazon C. Aquino, Imao Acosta, Hermes Magro, Jun Allen, Jamie Avelino, Marcel Antonio, Hendrix Arandilla, Philip Baden, Angel Cacnio, Bob Cadilla, Elmer Carnali, Jun Martinez, Nick Mauregiso, Nardo Miranda, Ferdinand Montemayor, Ervin Pantoja, Bicarra Portugueza, Tim Raymundo, Al Perez, Loreto Racuya, and Wilbur Yu. Proceeds will go to the construction of the new MHOC House of Formation and guest pastoral center in Marilao City.

Call 9428111. Also call Malu Melencio of Buenaventura & Associates at 8 (7447 1, 8920328.

A PAINTING left hanging in the old Baguio Central does not the building originally looked.

THE ORIGINAL Bonifacio pine floorboards are exposed once again in the restored classroom.

THE BUILDING Facade before restoration

Baguio school renovated

From page A1

tail.

There are many similarities between Baguio Central School and José Rizal Elementary School in Sariaya. Dry, the 1907 structure restored last year.

Both schools were brought back to their original configuration and design. Both were also fitted out with the latest teaching aids and equipment.

José Rizal outfitted

At José Rizal, the building's ground floor was fitted out with administrative offices plus additional classrooms, a music room and a room of the art-computer room. On its second floor is a large library whose wood louvered windows shutter out glaring sunlight. It also had set of capiz windows and floor-level retractable slide open to admit tropical breezes cooled by century-old acacia trees outside the structure.

School principals from Region Occidental province who attended the inauguration of the restored structure were amazed at the environment-friendliness of the 1907 building, the coolness of its interior spaces, and its continued appropriateness for modern classrooms.

The 63 Elementary School is a learning experience and an example of living heritage. It provides a working example of heritage-in-the-terrain. It proves that the educational system and the DepEd have been in continuous service in the province and throughout the country since the early 1900s. History lives, relevant in today's living as the restored school house demonstrates.

Restored schoolhouses from the 1905-1940 period are testimony to a key American contribution to the Philippines, the establishment of a nationally coordinated education system available to all Filipinos.

Old schoolhouses, many in disrepair or abandoned, are an untrodden source of additional classrooms severely needed by the public school system. In response to that lack, the main thrust of the Gen Engr Schoolhouse Program is to restore historic schoolhouses for reuse as modern educational facilities.

The José Rizal school shows the success of the program in introducing the value of heritage and its relevance to modern living. From advance repairs received, school administrators and teachers are enthusiastic to begin holding classes in the restored Baguio Central School.

Such awareness is vital for the preservation of heritage. Therefore the HCS always involves student apprentices and provides hands-on experiential learning in the different aspects of conservation. Some universities, the UP College of Architecture for example, give academic credit for the apprenticeship. Students volunteer their services but travel and lodging costs are shouldered by the HCS.

HCS architects who are qualified conservation practitioners volunteer to lead multi-disciplinary teams of students to carry out preliminary field research before restoration.

Since conservation goes beyond the architectural aspect, history students research on the individual buildings, environmental planners look at the urban context of heritage structures, and students of economics, tourism, humanities and the other disciplines also take part in the research.

Technical conservation requirements requisite for construction—architectural and site/erosion planning, engineering services—are entrusted from professional conservation specialists.

Heritage Watch: Taal

Heritage vigilantes are invited to be present at the hearing of the People of Taal (Batangas), Charis (the Taal Heritage NGO) versus the Taal Parish for the illegal construction of an admission chapel that defaces the heritage setting of the Taal Basilica, one of the historic structures preserved by the National Historic Institute.

The hearing is tomorrow in the Regional Trial Court of Taal. Those interested may call Dexie Serrano of HCS at 5218899 or 5213469.

E-mail feedback to ybilldoy@hotmail.com

Holy week's Best Trips
14-17 March: BAMALIW TOUR incl
Manila-Bicutan & Tagaytay
23-26 March: PALAWAN ESCAPADES
Puerto Princesa-Iwahig Bay & Underground River
Other tours on promos
19-21 March: BRAND SLOOOS TOUR
Mount Fuji & North Tokyo & Hakone | Nikkong & Laos
For inquiries & reservations, call CALEDWAY TOURS

ONE of the abandoned classrooms before restoration

Vandalism as art

By Constantino C. Tejero

Of all of our more interesting though lesser known young artists in Japan Oliveros, Working on and exhibiting his art relentlessly during the wrong main nevertheless stands on his artistic skill and the strength of his convictions.

We've watched his development for some years now, and we'd say a dramatic fall to take us by surprise. He seems to grow by leaps and bounds, and his every exhibit is different from the last.

A Fine Arts graduate from University of the Philippines, Oliveros, naturally, has been surprised by, and is interested in, the workings of the avant garde.

"Consider 'Attack Poisons' eight pieces in mixed media and oil on canvas, until March 12 in The Drawing Room, Mezzanine Building, 8307 Metropolitan Ave., Makati City.

The exhibit is a mix of graphic illustrations and geometric abstractions. The style may be that but the impulse is unabashedly Oedipus, if not Post Modernly.

Here Oliveros appears to be producing art in a fit of rage. Playing on a paradox, he vandalizes his own artworks, avoiding the tension between creation and destruction.

"Attack Poisons" is its fascinating illustration of a weeping dog aiming a gun at the viewer, reminds us of Ingmar Bergman's graphics appropriated from comic books and pulp fiction. But then Oliveros has defiled the pictorial field with splashes of black, white, browns, red, orange, pink, blue, green, and literally slashed the canvas.

Some sort of pentimento

Indiscriminate slashing of the canvas has also been considered as "When You Touch and Are Found, Ask Your Dentist," which is black-and-white graphic outline of a pandemonium unnervingly demented. The viewer wonders if this is some sort of pentimento.

The notion of pentimento ("to repent," or "to regret") is established in "The Union for the Sake of the Nation" Here the canvas is not only slashed but also bombed up or the skin bleached with canvas image presumably from another work, producing a military-camouflage motif. The visual frame is written over with the piece's title and blind-folded lines.

When literal slashing is not enough, the artist uses dubious color schemes and inharmonious forms, as in "A Painting for a Missing Masterpiece" and "Flare."

Their combinations of black, yellow, ochre, black, white, orange, pink, turquoise, chromacolor, ochre, red, yellow-green, dark-green, plus the criss-crossing lines and curves and jumble of circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, ellipses, polka dots—look oddly if not downright ugly.

The image of an aborigine is visible in this mix, by the way as it is weakest element. The second, a piece vaguely reminding Carlos da Silva's "Clandestine," might be an afterthought but it could also be a patchwork of images from a bygone's overview.

Classic notions of painting

In "Blank" (of course, there are no blanks), there is some white splattering, as if the artist has wanted to obliterate with contrasts and patches the finely rendered original image.

"Untitled" is a portfolio view of a red brick wall against black and white, a piece conventional enough to stick out like a sore thumb in the show.

"Fear of Bad Paintings (Produces Bad Paintings)," showing floating heads of black, yellow, gold and red-faces against white, could be the artist's final statement. It just looks bad, that's all.

Here, then, Oliveros is intentionally making "bad" art, since he is not only trying to demolish the barrier between "high" art and "low" art (as the Pop artists do) but also smashing preconceived ideas about what a painting should be (as the Post Modernists do).

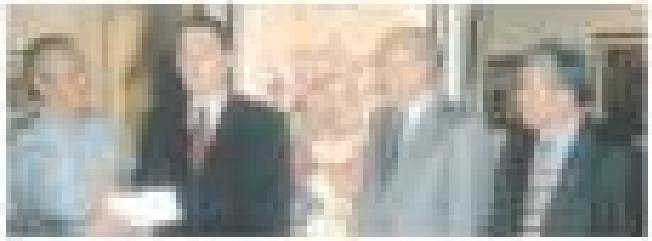
As the exhibit title says, this is Oliveros's latest turn in his study of painting as "undermining its classic notions of virtuosity and objectiveness, thus overturning the viewers' expectations of what a masterwork should be."

A viewer coming out of such show is bound to ask: Who is complete?

The artist may have gone too far in making a point, but the fact that he has made the supreme sacrifice of destroying that which he has created shows the courage of his convictions, mistake or no mistake.

"ATTACK Poisons"

"BIRD"



MARVEL Baldovino presents part of the proceeds of his exhibit in Jakarta to Asean Secretary General Ong Keng Yong for the benefit of the tsunami victims. Looking on are Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia Bodan Primavera and Asean Deputy Secretary General Wilfredo V. Villacorta. Baldovino also donated his painting, "Muslim Ceremonial Dance," to the Asean Secretariat Art Gallery in Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta.

Saturday Group . . .

"EIGHTH" Boston (from Where the Women at Jamboree)," by Carlos "Botong" Francisco

"STILL Life" Lito Cruz Cruz

Seven years ago, a group of artists began meeting on Saturdays to paint and exchange views on art and artists. Dubbed the Saturday Group, it now has 15 members, all of whom have had one-man shows and have participated in numerous group exhibitions.

Today, the group is holding its 10th anniversary exhibition at the Ayala Museum, featuring 15 works by each member. The exhibition runs until March 20.

Among the artists in the group are Lito Cruz Cruz, Ben Cabrera, Jose Tence Ruiz, Ramon Orlina, Jose Joya, Jerry Elumba, Ronald Ventura, Jose Tan, Jose Santos, Ronald Ventura, Jose Tan, Jose Santos, Ronald Ventura, Jose Tan, Jose Santos